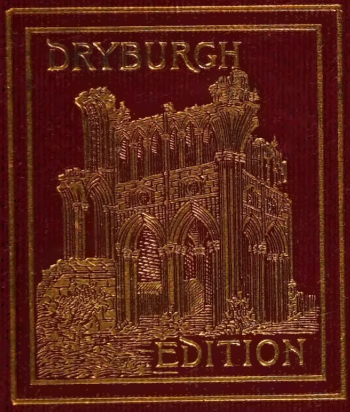
DRYBURGH
EDITION

# SCOTT'S POETICAL WORKS

VOL. I

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# POETICAL WORKS

OF

## SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

SELECTED AND EDITED
WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES
BY
ANDREW LANG

VOL. I

LONDON AND EDINBURGH
ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK
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# PREFACE

In this selection of Scott's poems the text is that of the late Mr. Minto's Edition,[1] and many of the foot-notes are those which he gave: they are usually abbreviations of Sir Walter's own. Scott's notes are omitted, for reasons of limited space, with great regret. Some of them, indeed, have been made superfluous by the very vogue of his own writings, and no educated person is now unfamiliar with many facts which Scott first made current coin. In a number of other cases, he quotes illustrative anecdotes and legends, which would lose all their interest if they were condensed. The few brief notes which I have appended are generally condensations of Sir Walter's where information seemed more or less necessary or desirable. In other instances I have mentioned some fact which has been recovered by antiquarianism since Scott wrote, or which is connected with his own life and methods. His notes, to people who love things old, are not the least charming part of his works. However, they are easily accessible in many editions.

[1] The text, as is well known, of the poems is imperfect. Scott was not devoted to proof-reading; he was outworn with work and ill-health when the time came for re-editing his poems, and the labour fell on Lockhart, who, in the edition uniform with the novels, gives the manuscript various readings, but does not invariably offer an accurate text.

In selecting the poems I have chosen the lyrics from the novels and from other sources which appeal most to my own fancy, without suggesting that the minor pieces omitted are inferior to those inserted. As something had to go, the dramas, the merely occasional poems of *Waterloo* (though it possesses some very spirited passages of war), *Don Roderick*, and that "trifle" (as Scott calls it) *Harold the Dauntless*, have been reluctantly left out. The Introduction contains a brief attempt at an estimate of Scott's character and genius.

ANDREW LANG.

St. Andrews,
28*th November* 1894.

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FROM BACK OF CHAIR AT ABBOTSFORD.

# INTRODUCTION

THE origin, the first appearance, and the development of genius in the individual are always matters of curious interest. Too often the beginnings, *les enfances*, are unnoted; the ancestry, with whatever hereditary influences may have existed, is obscure; the very environment may be dim.

In the little that is preserved about the progenitors of Burns, of Shakspeare, of Carlyle, we see nothing that leads up to these illustrious intellects. They sprang from among honest, strenuous, undistinguished people. Why, among myriads of such houses, did three produce men of genius? Why did that genius take its peculiar ply? Whence comes its differentia? Why was it confined to one child in the household alone? What strange chemistry of nature produced the one "sport" or singular exception? This is the central and probably unanswerable riddle of evolution. We can now discern the paths of the winds, and make some fairly accurate predictions about their path; but the spirit, but genius, "bloweth where it listeth."

In the case of Walter Scott, all that we can ever reasonably hope to learn about hereditary influences, environment, and education is matter of common knowledge. We may almost say that if a cadet of Harden was to be a poet (which seemed improbable) he would be such a poet as Scott. But why a poet at all?

His thoroughly Scottish love of genealogies made him take pains with the study of his own. In April 1808 he began the autobiographical Ashestiel fragment. If any good could come from it, he was ready to submit his moral character to analysis, as he would, in like case, bequeath his body for dissection (Lockhart, i. 2). But he was unconscious of being, in any way, outside of the ordinary moral run of mankind, and, as he had not the talents of Burns or Chatterton, "was exempt from their violent passions." In truth he was as great a marvel morally as intellectually, being one of those persons "naturally good," whom Plato recognised as the source and canon of virtue in the world. He blossomed in good deeds and kind temper, as "a good tree bears good fruit," and with that blessed unconsciousness which is praised by Marcus Aurelius. Neither his character nor his genius can be explained by doctrines of heredity, as far as our knowledge goes. He came of good blood and lineage on either side; he had a worthy, honest, *borné* father, an excellent and intelligent mother; but his brothers and sisters, with a large proportion of his contemporaries, shared these or like advantages. None of them, nobody perhaps in any age, had Scott's moral qualities, any more than they had his genius. Here philosophy must own herself at fault: were we omniscient, we should know why Scott was Scott, being human we cannot know, and the guesses of the votaries of heredity are fruitless.

If we look at the question of inherited intellect, we find that Scott's father was a remote cadet of a warlike Border house, the Scotts of Harden. In his great-grandfather's time, his direct ancestors lost their grip of the land. His grandfather was bred to the sea, he became a farmer, brought up his son, Scott's father, as an attorney (Writer to the Signet), and the Writer married a lady of the Rutherford family. Looking back along the line, we find a man of books and reading in the great-grandfather, Beardie, "a Jacobite and a person of considerable sense." Scott's mother was the daughter of the Professor of Medicine in the University of Edinburgh. Hence, on both sides, may conceivably come something of what we may call a bookish strain.

A descendant of those parents would not excite surprise if he became a physician, a clergyman, a lawyer, or even a man of letters in general. But why was this possible ancestral tendency carried to such an abnormally high power in Scott, whereas his brothers and sisters showed but little inclination towards literature? This is precisely the sort of question which doctrines of heredity do not elucidate.

There is a prevalent and popular theory of considerable age, at present associated with the name of Dr. Lombroso, that great wits are to madness near allied. Certain morbid congenital conditions may declare themselves in madness, epilepsy, consumption—or genius. How far does this theory help us? In Scott's family there was probably some such taint, but then it exists in a large proportion of families which produce no genius. The father and mother lived to a considerable age; the father died of apoplectic paralysis: he must die of one thing or another, and few mortal complaints escape the eye of the watchful *doctrinaire* of heredity. Almost any one of them will serve his turn, and prove genius to be a form of inherited disease. Again, five of Scott's elder brothers and sisters died very young, probably from the unhealthy nature of the old house near that where Darnley was slain. The sister, Anne, had a series of dangerous accidents, which seem to have ruined her constitution. Robert was healthy, and had been known to write verses (Lockhart, i. 15). He died a victim to the climate of India. Tom had "infinite humour," and no less indolence; he never tried to justify Scott's opinion of his powers. Daniel was the common ne'er-do-well. Springing all from the same loins as Scott, they were as utterly remote from his genius and character as most men and women. At the age of eighteen months, while teething, Scott suddenly lost the power of his right leg. He was lame, more or less, through all the remainder of his life. This malady has been attributed to some congenital defect in the bone-making processes. It has been pointed out that the singular boat-like shape of his head may be due to the same cause. The parietal sutures of the skull did not join in the ordinary way, but clenched, or clamped. The brain, unable to expand

normally and laterally, forced a way upwards into "the peak" of "Peveril," as his friends named him. If a want of bone-forming power possibly stinted Scott's intellects, making him a little lower than Shakspeare, the same influence, when it left him lame, incapacitated him for the active life of a soldier—the life which he would have chosen. In place of victories, of which we had abundance, he gave us *Waverley* and the *Lay;* he annexed whole provinces in the realm of romance.

These suggestions may be fanciful, but science has provided nothing better. We have, in Scott, great genius, but why in him rather than in another, we know not. About the origin and the elect of genius, science can only prophesy, very wisely, after the event. No doctor in any lore could have looked at Scott's parents, at his pedigree, and said, "Hence will be born a great poet." But, as Jeanne d'Arc said, "Messire has books in which no clerk has read, however great his clerkhood." In those books, and only read by One, lies written the secret history of genius.

Thus much of heredity: we only write *pour prendre note*, and because so much has been advanced concerning matters of which, in the ultimate resort, nothing is known. The question seems easier when we ask, not "Why was Scott a genius?" but "Why was he the kind of genius that he was?" Here his environment was powerful. He came of a line of Border Jacobites; he absorbed the legends and sentiments of loyalists and of Borderers. Almost his earliest conscious memories were of the American revolt against the mother country. The young eyes of the child Walter Scott, the dimmer eyes of Charles Edward Stuart, were strained across the Atlantic to watch the war. The little boy felt a deep personal antipathy to Washington, and a devout adherence to the Lost Cause. He heard tales of Cumberland's butcheries from one who had seen the hangings at Carlisle. Border ballads were his cradle-song. He was the friend of forlorn loyalties, of desperate causes, of wild adventures, and of his native land. All these emotions endured to the very last, and mingled in the delirium of his death-bed. His one expedition at Rome was made to the tomb of the last Stuarts. Those seeds

of opinion had taken root before Scott was four years of age. Already he could read ballads and the Wars of the Jews. So strong a nature, so early impressed, dwelling all through his youth among alarms of war, prevented by disease from following his country's colours, would inevitably, we think, find vent, if in poetry at all, in poetry of battle. His mother was fond of reading verse; his early friends were antiquaries; he could not always join in the sports of boyhood; thus he became bookish, preferring all that dealt with "the wonderful and terrible," "the common taste of children, but in which I have remained a child to this day." His unsettled education did not encourage him to form habits of minute philological study; of Greek the great master of romance was to know no more than Petrarch knew. Any effect on style, in the way of chastening it, any influence in favour of elegance, and limit, and rigid selection, and exquisite choice of words, which the study of Greek may exercise in favoured cases, was not to affect the genius and manner of Scott. Thus he was the kind of poet that we might reasonably expect him to become. His themes, his sentiments, his landscape were given him, from earliest childhood, by the memories, legends, ballads, and nature of the Border. Whatever else in him was hereditary, love of shrewd blows, good steeds, hill and corrie, flood and ford, witch and warlock, brownie and bogle, was inherited, if any such thing can be inherited at all. Meanwhile the manner and method of expression were left undisciplined. There was in some respects a want of fineness in his constitution. With the keenest eye of a sportsman (though with a heart that reproached him for shooting a blackcock), he had almost no sense of taste or of smell. He could not distinguish wine that was corked. There is a similar, though not necessarily a connected, defect to be noted in his lack of fineness as an artist. Except in his lyrics, he seldom has a considerable passage of verse undeformed by such slips as even a tyro can correct. He hurries on, *ruit profusus*, now spirited, now tame, now clear, now confused, with many a break of flatness, with much matter that might wisely have been retrenched. It is not so in his best lyrics, where the inspiration is thorough, and the metal is completely fused.

Scott's boyish exercises in verse are partly known, and the prophecy of his genius by Mrs. Cockburn is familiar. He was distinguished at school for poetical versions from Horace and Virgil; these have not survived. But already he was "a maker." In intervals of bad health he read poetry profusely, read Spenser, Ossian, Shakspeare, ballads, with every attainable romance. To read more romances he learned most of the Latin languages, and, after leaving school, acquired German just when the romantic stream was bearing along the early works of Goethe and Bürger. He collected ballads, which are still at Abbotsford, and such claymores and prints of Prince Charles and flotsam of the Forty-Five as came in his way. As a young clerk in his father's office, he worked more assiduously than any, to make a few shillings wherewith to buy books. As a young clerk, too, he first visited the Highlands, and met the courteous, simple people, and the lairds with their "blawing, bleezing stories" of the Fifteen and the Forty-Five. His holidays were spent in long country rambles, alone or in company of a friend, with whom he shared his day-dreams. Then, and always, he tells us, he was much of a dreamer, living in fantasy, and accessible to moods of wistful and tender melancholy, which returned in his latest years. But such moods he mastered, and carefully concealed. Gillies tells a curious anecdote of Scott walking in a kind of unconscious manner, which is almost the only sign of something mystic in his genius, something akin to the prolonged contemplation of Socrates. Lord Tennyson occasionally spoke of a similar condition, approaching that of trance, in his own experience; but, if there be a trace of this in Scott, it is only a trace, though perhaps it should not pass without notice. "I had a dreamy way of going much further than I intended," he says, under "the inexpressible charm of wood, water, and wilderness." It was probably about the age of sixteen that he composed, and then burned, a long poem on the Conquest of Granada (Lockhart, i. 183). After this, till 1796, when he published his translation of Bürger's *Lenore*, he had only written "an occasional sonnet to his mistress's eyebrow." His "mistress" was probably the *Lady Green Mantle*, whom he loved "from

almost the dawn of the passions," and did not cease to love, in spite of separation and time and death. In *Red-gauntlet*, *Rokeby*, and the *Lay* we find traces of this immortal passion, and in late pages of his Journal. No doubt there were early lyrics to this lady. One only, of several which his most intimate friends thought without merit, has survived, namely, "The violet in her greenwood bower." In 1795 he read, and translated, *Lenore;* in 1796 he printed his work, apparently hoping to make a favourable impression on the lady of his heart; but in the autumn of that year all his hopes were blighted. As for his translation, "the adventure proved a dead loss," like most of these adventures. In 1798-99, after his marriage, Scott translated *Götz von Berlichingen*, and wrote *The House of Aspen*. He also seems to have begun his ballads, such as "The Eve of St. John," for Monk Lewis. The contact with that rhymer was very useful to Scott; he was encouraged, and also admonished, by the author of *The Monk*. In "The Eve of St. John" he had found himself and his real genius. The theme was one of those wonderful and terrible topics in which he delighted; the scenery was that of Smailholme Tower; and for the manner, it was modelled freely on the style of the ballads which he gathered in his raids into Liddesdale. There is not, there will not be, a better ballad of the ghostly, nor one where the rhymes echo more clearly the clatter of hoofs and the ring of scabbard on stirrup. Here was, assuredly, something *not* "between Burns and Gray," as had been predicted, but quite a fresh voice was heard, proclaiming the restoration of Romance. The critic, perhaps, has a feeling more than common friendly for the Baron of Smailholme. As a child of five years or so, turning over books in a cottage of the Forest, he made the Baron's acquaintance and trembled at the appearance of Sir Richard of Coldinghame, before he had heard the name of Scott. There are weak lines to be sure, as "the touch was fiery warm" in some early versions, and "the vision shook his head." But it is a noble ballad, except by Elspeth's "Red Harlaw," unexcelled by Scott himself, and in it is the germ of the *Lay*. *The House of Aspen* is *calqué* on a German piece, *Der Heilige Vehme*. John Kemble thought of producing it on the stage, but did not.

Apparently Scott little regretted the disappointment, and to write for the stage he could never bring himself. He had a very great distaste, and some contempt, for the playwright's business, as practised in his time, though he liked some actors and actresses. *The House of Aspen* has passages which, written so early, are prophetic of the Novels. "Is not their present situation," says the Baron's wife, speaking of her sons then on the verge of battle with a foe—"Is not their present situation——?" "Situation! I know it well," cries the maimed Baron, "as fair a field for open fight as ever I hunted over." Le Balafré or Major Bellenden would not have spoken otherwise. The lyrics in the piece are of but moderate merit.

These were years of ballad-making, such as "Glenfinlas," "Cadyow Castle," and others less excellent. Scott was encouraged by Lady Louisa Stuart, his life-long friend and confidante, and by other ladies of great Scottish houses. The years 1800-1802 saw the preparation of the *Border Minstrelsy*, which was at once successful; and the third volume of the *Border Minstrelsy* was to include "a long poem of my own; it will be a kind of romance of Border chivalry, in a light horseman sort of stanza." The subject of the Goblin Page was given by the beautiful Countess of Dalkeith. A kick from a horse, in yeomanry drill, lent Scott enforced leisure; the story took its own course, outgrew its destined place in the *Minstrelsy*, and was finished in November 1804. Scott frankly acknowledged, in the preface of 1830, his debt for the metrical scheme to Coleridge's *Christabel*. Portions of that then unpublished work had been recited to Scott by Mr. Stoddart, from memory. "This mescolanza of measures," he says, "had already been used, in humorous poetry, by Anstey, Wolcott, and others," but Coleridge first employed it for serious purposes. Whether the process was wholly agreeable to Coleridge, who may, to a certain extent, have deemed himself anticipated, is not certain. For him it was singularly unfortunate that the *Lay* preceded by many years his magical fragment. The genius of Coleridge was a thing without precedent or parallel: but lacking the practical element, being wayward and procrastinating, he never received the popular honours and rewards which were showered on Scott. Once started,

after some hesitations and discouragement, the *Lay* was written "at about the rate of a canto a week." Scott had expected some success "from the return to a more simple and natural style of poetry." The philosophy of this "return" from the manner of Queen Anne's time, and of the Georgian age,—the spirit of romance turning and tossing in his dreams, in the works of Cowper, Gray, Collins, and Thomson,—has been written about more than sufficiently. Tea-cup times were over: men were looking at Nature for themselves; the poetry of town life had waxed wearisome. There was a great return to Nature. Scott himself, in the *Lay*, dropped the jaded conventionalities which peep out in some of his earlier ballads. There was a new measure, a revived theme: a gallant spirit was singing of gallant deeds, of knight and minstrel, maiden and magician. Contempt for "Gothic barbarism" had yielded to a better knowledge of history, and to a somewhat optimistic view of the good old times. The subject had found a poet absolutely congenial, a Homeric singer, delighting in the joy of battle and the free air. The *Lay* was in every one's hands, and Scott's fortune was made. In a letter to Miss Seward (Lockhart, ii. 216) he plays the part of his own critic frankly and well. The story, he says, lacks "continuity," "which, were it to write again, I would endeavour to give it." If he had tried to rewrite it, he would have failed. He could only strike out his work at a heat. "The Dwarf Page is an excrescence, and I plead guilty to all the censures concerning him." But the Page was the germ of all, and the author "knew no more than the man in the moon how I was to end." Then the bizarre tale seemed best put in an old minstrel's mouth, and the Page "contrived to slink down into the kitchen," or wherever he did go, at the cry of "Gyblin, come!" Scott paid no kind of attention to the professional reviewers. Jeffrey talked of his "local partialities," without which the *Lay* could never have existed. He might as well complain of the "local partialities" of Homer, or accuse Gray of a most unfortunate and ruinous *penchant* for Eton. In reviewing *Marmion*, Jeffrey, with true critical tact and consistency, complained that the poem was not Scotch enough: "local partialities"

were too completely subdued. Contemporary reviewing is usually of this kind: a critic must pick faults. "We talk in a foreign language to each other," said Scott of his professional critics, "as they do not understand what I call poetry," and what the universal voice of mankind calls poetry.

A reviewer who shares the "local partialities" of the poet cannot be an unbiassed critic of the *Lay*. Every hill and burn and river, from Teviot stone to Eskdale, from White Combe to Eildon, has its voice, which bids me prefer the *Lay* to all Scott's other long poems. But, setting aside the patriotism of a child of Ettrick Forest, the style of the *Lay* seems to me the most varied, the manner the most intense, the action the most vigorous and concentrated, of all Scott's rhymed romances. The Page, far from being an excrescence, is the hinge on which all turns. Without the Page, there can be no story. Scott never was more rapid than in William of Deloraine's ride; never more awful than in the scene where the wizard is exhumed; never more tender than in his love-passages here; above all, never more himself than in the wistful grace which clothes the form of the Latest Minstrel. For he himself was the last minstrel of many an old loyalty, the friend and poet of many a forlorn cause. And he wrote in the fulness of young strength and happiness; he wrote of what he loved best, the scenes that were dearest to him, as to his humble panegyrist: of the days and deeds which most strongly affected his ardent and chivalrous nature.

It was in November 1806 that Scott began *Marmion* at Ashestiel—

> November's sky is chill and drear,
> November's leaf is red and sear.

Ashestiel was his happiest home, and on the rolling moors behind Ashestiel, that sunder Tweed from Yarrow, he had "grand rides when he was thinking of *Marmion*." The book was finished under the roof of Harden, at Mertoun, in the Christmas of 1807. Much other work, for example the editing of Dryden, had been done in the interval. "Give us more lays and correct them at leisure," said Southey; "it never does to sit down doggedly to correct." It certainly "never did" with

Scott. Erskine might lecture him, but he was incorrigible. He tried again and again to be "correct," as in *Rokeby*, but he was obliged to let the demon of his genius master him. Of style he was never a votary; he had to say his say just as it came uppermost, and, of course, his works are now the one solitary example of literary matter enduring bravely in contempt almost of literary manner. Often interrupted by duties and occupations of all kinds, he had to "leave Marmion gasping upon Flodden Field," till he could find leisure "to knock him on the head with two or three thumping stanzas." Scott had never the leisure of a professional poet—a Tennyson or a Wordsworth. He was a teller of tales: the story was the thing with him. His taste was not offended, in verse or prose, by a few slovenly stanzas or paragraphs, thrown out as his mind was at work on great scenes to come. Southey thought the materials of *Marmion* better than those of the *Lay*, "but not so well fitted together," and he disliked the interruption of the Introductory Epistles. They can, of course, be read apart from the romance, and they supply us with the best portrait of Scott from his own hand—of Scott and of the country which he loved. Wordsworth did not think that Scott's aim was that which he would have proposed to Scott. And that was nearly all that William Wordsworth had to say to his friend about his friend's poem. About his own, as Lockhart shows, Wordsworth could talk for ever. A sense of humour was not among the gifts of the worthy man. As for Jeffrey, I confess that I have not the patience to re-read his review. As Lockhart says, perhaps the day came when Jeffrey could not reflect on it "with perfect equanimity." This bantam, at the bottom of Parnassus, crowed in a language not understanded by Sir Walter. Political pique, personal vanity, possibly a dash of envy, entered into the review which, at that time, was the only literary organ regarded by men. When Jeffrey averred that Scott "throughout neglected Scottish feelings and Scottish characters," when he said that after reading about Angus and King James and Edinburgh, and the glorious and fatal day of Flodden, he plainly showed what spirit he was of. *O, le grand homme, rien ne lui peut plaire!*

The beginning of *Marmion* is very spirited and martial, though the bearings of the hero—

> A falcon, on his shield,
> Soar'd sable in an azure field—

are bad heraldry—colour on colour. The knight, throwing "a chain of twelve marks' weight" to the pursuivants, reminds us of a dearer friend then unborn, the immortal Le Balafré, Ludovic Leslie. The introduction of the plot, in the herald's references to the duel with Wilton, is managed with skilful irony, for

> He who conquered in the right,
> Marmion of Fontenaye,

is, of course, a felon warrior. The introduction of "Albany Featherstonhaugh," from Surtees's sham ballad, reminds us that the whole hinge of the plot, the duel with the spectre knight, is based on another *supercherie* of Surtees, a pinchbeck ghost story of his own invention, palmed off on the unsuspecting sheriff. "The MS. chronicle from which Mr. Cradocke took this curious extract cannot now be found in the Chapter Library of Durham." It is a case of *aut Robertus aut Diabolus.* When Marmion is bantered about the "gentle page" who was "a gentle paramour," we see how little Scott shone in correcting. In the MS. Marmion "answer'd stern and high." In the printed poem he "made a calm reply." This is weak; but who can agree with the genteel Jeffrey that venison pasties are vulgar, or that the wind which warms itself on Friar John's nose is more depraved than the breeze which took similar liberties with Bardolph's? Here Jeffrey finds "a debasing lowness and vulgarity, which, we think, must be offensive to every reader of delicacy." *Henry IV.* must be quite intolerable to students so very nice as this ideal whipper-snapper had in his eye. "The first presentment of the mysterious Palmer is laudable," says Jeffrey. Perhaps Scott thought so too, for he presented him again, in *Ivanhoe.* The powerful scene of the immurement, in canto ii., has, of course, no historical warrant. Whatever cruel deeds may have been done by individuals, the Church at no time permitted erring nuns to be

bricked up, and so starve to death. Probably the legend has been produced by a vague memory of what was actually done to sinful vestals in ancient Rome, and by consequent misinterpretation of mural interments.[1] The unlucky nun is made serviceable by her *exposé* of the motive of the tale, while her fierce and tameless courage forms a picture such as Scott rarely drew of woman. The ringing in Marmion's distant ear, on the night of her immurement, is a touch of superstition very characteristic of him who introduced the wraith in *The Bride of Lammermoor*. The scene of the hostelry Scott could have done better in prose, and the host's intercalated tale has the defect of most episodic tales, except that of Wandering Willie, in *Redgauntlet*. The incident of the nocturnal combat with the supposed spectral knight has not much to be said for it, except that the story could not get on without it. The psychology of Marmion's motives, however, is well explained: a fever in the blood, with a faint prick of superstition, spurred him forth. The glorious description of Edinburgh, the elegiac tenderness of the lines on boyish memories of Blackford Hill, introduce us to the splendid and sonorous close, the marshalled Scottish host, the king, so gallant and so notably *fey*, speeding with a light heart to a glorious and woeful death, within the forest of the Scottish spears. Here is the gist and charm of *Marmion*—here, in the historical tragedy, in the fate of Scotland, her king, and the Flowers of the Forest, not in the adventures of fictitious characters whom we scarcely learn to know, or care for much, in a versified romance. Fictitious personages, Wilton, Clare, and the rest, need (I venture to think) the detail and the atmosphere of prose. His heroes are never Scott's strong point, even in the Waverley Novels; his heroines vary; his villains, and his princes, and his young squires, like Harry Blount, are his best characters, apart from those humorous bailies and caddies who would have horrified Jeffrey "in a serious poem." Even Marmion we should have known better in a prose romance; and thus Scott's dramatic genius, his power of creating characters, is thwarted by

[1] The truth has been set forth by the Rev. Herbert Thurston, S.J., in a controversy which arose out of a recent novel.

the nature of his vehicle, in rhyme. But his chivalrous and patriotic passion, when he writes poetry, finds ample scope, and, in the close of *Marmion*, he comes nearest to the Homeric χάρμη. Mr. Matthew Arnold, indeed, complained of the "jerky" utterances of the dying Marmion, but the world has not agreed with his censure. Achilles or Tydeus' son would not have thought otherwise than Marmion, viewing the Scottish camp—

> For, by St. George, were that host mine,
> Not power infernal nor divine
> Should once to peace my soul incline,
> Till I had dimm'd their armour's shine
> In glorious battle-fray!

Like Cetewayo, Marmion feels the imperative instinctive craving "to wash his spears." Then comes the noble chord of colour, justly praised by Mr. Ruskin, black, green, and red, which hangs, like an ominous rainbow, over Scott's "own romantic town," "piled deep and massy, close and high." In the description of the Highland host—

> Loud were their clamouring tongues, as when
> The clanging sea-fowl leave the fen—

Scott, perhaps unconsciously, repeats the very simile of Homer when he sings of the allies of Ilios. With a gallant speed and vigour Scott turns from the camp to the court, to James and the siren Lady Heron, with her ringing ballad of "Lochinvar," and again to the dark resentful Angus. It must be admitted that Jeffrey censured with justice the uninspired piece of explanation of the plot that follows. Scott hated "explanations," and verse is a very unfit medium for what is seldom other than dull, even in prose. The story of the forged papers, itself a notable blot in the composition, leads up but poorly to the portent that boded of Flodden. Very characteristic of Scott is the lament here over the ruined cross of Edinburgh, where King James VIII. had been proclaimed in 1745. The magistrates and Lords of Session removed the ancient monument in 1756. The pedestal of the Cross is now at Abbotsford, and we may stand on the steps whence King James the Eighth was proclaimed a hundred and fifty years ago. If we want to contrast a scene of personal romance as told by Scott

in verse with a precisely similar scene as described by him in prose, we have only to place the meeting of Clare with Wilton, whom she has deemed dead, beside the encounter of Morton and Edith in *Old Mortality*. The comparison proves, if proof were needed, the superiority of prose over verse in the proper field of the novel. Poetry resumes her sway over her own in the fierce scene between Angus and Marmion, and holds her lofty flight, "never stooping her wing, nor wavering from her course," as even Jeffrey is constrained to admit, to the close. "Rapid, sustained, and lofty" is the movement of the battle, full of lines that boyhood rejoices in, and that man can never forget. It is, indeed, to the "dear schoolboy" whom he has "cheated of his hour of play" that Scott most fondly, and with most certainty, appeals.

The critics, with their unvarying method, now bade Scott "go and do something else" than the thing that he was born to do. But the heroic parts of *Marmion* abide immortal, in the very highest rank of martial song, addressing themselves to passions as immortal.

*Marmion* had "an unexampled success"; the details may be found in Lockhart, iii. 66, 67. People bought books in those days, nay, they bought poetry. The copyright, unluckily, was sold for £1000, and Byron, as every one knows, had a foolish fling at the "mercenary" Scott, "Apollo's venal son." Scott casually alludes to his censor as a "whelp" in a letter of the period, but he was too much of a man to bear malice about a mere literary "stone-bicker."

When Byron carried his imitation (a heavy and tuneless imitation) of Scott's manner into the field of Levantine piratical romance, and when the novelty of the topics, when the title, the personal vigour and beauty and carefully cultivated Satanic reputation of the new poet, won the public, Scott was conquered too, and, as it were, hung up his Border jack and spear, the arms of his minstrelsy, in the Muses' shrine. He was not only too generous to feel envy, he was so generous as to admire, far above his own verses, work essentially inferior to these verses in every conceivable way. But now he was in the full tide of his triumph. On 2nd March 1810 he announces *The Lady of the Lake* to his friend Morritt of Rokeby, as "a poem

partly Highland." On 8th December 1806 Surtees had asked him to turn his attention to the Highlands, but Surtees wanted *la très piteuse et délectable histoire du preux et errant chevalier, Charles Stuart.* This work Scott had already begun, in *Waverley*, commenced in 1805. Already he saw the right path for his genius as a narrator, namely the path of prose fiction. But *Waverley* lay in a drawer full of fishing-tackle for nine long years, not to emerge and be completed till Byron had eclipsed the poetical vogue of Scott. In 1806 he was still doubting whether or not verse was the proper vehicle for the praises of Prince Charles. But of verse in his honour the Prince enjoys enough, and of the best. Sir Walter, meanwhile, sang of his scarcely less adventurous ancestor, James V. Miss Rutherford, Scott's aunt, with aunt-like caution, implored him not to risk his laurels, but about his laurels he was never nervous. He would write prose, for life, if he failed—a determination to which he returned after *The Lord of the Isles. The Lady* appeared in May 1810, and was so successful that he thought he had fixed a nail in the wheel of Fortune.

No poem, not even the *Lay*, begins with such a high, clear, and sweet note of romance as—

The stag at eve had drunk his fill.

The chase has had no such minstrel, and the interest of scene (then so original) is nowhere excelled. The King and Roderick Dhu are among Scott's triumphs: a gay monarch, a picturesque bandit were persons with whom his fancy was ever at home. For charm of description the entrance of Ellen is unrivalled, and old Allan's second sight is on another level than that of Saunders Souplejaw, the seer of Glen Houlakin. "The *Taisch*," says Scott, "seems to be now universally abandoned to the use of poetry." In fact, this kind of *clairvoyance* is still extremely common and credited in the Highlands, despite the changes of the world. In Allan, as throughout the poem, Scott's knowledge of his topic, his learning, laboriously acquired and lightly worn, is conspicuous. In brief, for nature, incident, interest of tale, and character, *The Lady of the Lake* holds a central

place among his creations. We have only to regret, in style, the too facile and monotonous trot of the octosyllabic verse. Yet the race of Malise with the Fiery Cross may match with the ride of William of Deloraine, and "The Guard Room" is worthy of the author of *Ivanhoe* and *Quentin Durward*, while the archery of Douglas foretells the feats of Locksley. Indeed, it is curious to mark how often, and apparently how unnoticed, the incidents and situations of the poems recur in the prose romances. This fact by itself should have solved the mystery of "The Author of *Waverley*."

Even Jeffrey was able to praise *The Lady of the Lake* as it deserved to be praised. Anecdotes of the poem's popular vogue, and the consequent rise in the price of coach hire, are too familiar to be repeated. Scott was the Columbus of the hitherto undiscovered Highlands, whither the public flocked, to stare and "rave, recite, and madden through the land." To the present reviewer, as he has said, the octosyllabics of *The Lady of the Lake* seem monotonous, and he prefers the varied measures of the *Lay*. Scott, however, defended the measure, as "more favourable to narrative poetry" than heroic verse. He would read, by way of experiment, the opening of Pope's *Iliad* thus:

> Achilles' wrath, to Greece the spring
> Of woes unnumbered, Goddess, sing;
> That wrath which sent to Pluto's reign
> The souls of chiefs in battle slain,—

and so forth. It is dreadfully unlike Homer, but, perhaps, not more unlike him than Pope's own version. Ellis maintained, however, that Scott's real motive for using octosyllabics was *la sainte paresse*. Scott may have agreed: he did not want his children to read *The Lady of the Lake*. "Papa says there's nothing so bad for young people as reading bad poetry." Surely here is a poet most unlike his tribe!

His colloquial criticisms were quite fantastic. He remarked that Burns and himself "ought not to be named on the same day"; when, in fact, as representatives of different Scottish traits, they ought never to be named on different days. Both had the richest humour; both were good Jacobites,—Burns wrote the

last birthday ode for Charles III. on the king's last birthday, a touching fact to consider,—but Burns was a satirist and a lyrist as passionate as Catullus, while Scott hated satire, and never uttered "lyric cries" about his own affairs. Burns was not only a Jacobite, but a Jacobin—a poetical reconciliation of contradictories pleasing to dwell upon. Scott was a feudalist of the ideal feudalism, and as great a foe as Burns to the tyranny of those who would exercise the feudal privileges while shirking the feudal duties. Scott's was a dramatic, Burns's was a personal, genius: Burns had more fire and heat, Scott more light and sweetness. Let us not dispraise them by vaunting the relative superiority of either.

But we love Scott the better for his generous avoidance of rivalry. "If you wish to speak of a real poet," says this extraordinary critic, "Joanna Baillie is now the highest genius of our country." But the dead singer who gave him most pleasure was Dr. Johnson. The last lines that Sir Walter ever sent to the press were a quotation from "The Vanity of Human Wishes." Thus widely different were his ideals from his performances; and, in thinking of this lord of romance, this master of horse and spear, with his neglect of self, his kindness overriding taste and reason, his noble, stoical nature, responding to that of the dear, unvanquished hero, Dr. Johnson, one feels I know not what mingling of mirth and love and sadness.

In 1810 Scott visited the Hebrides for the first time, and conceived the idea of writing *The Lord of the Isles*. But this was deferred, and on 20th December 1811 he announced *Rokeby* to Mr. Morritt. In truth, he wanted money for the "cottage" at Abbotsford, "that ill-omened palace of his race" as it proved to be. It were superfluous and impertinent to confute, here, the cheap criticisms on Scott as a purchaser of real estate. He began by wanting a modest home on Tweedside. As wealth accrued, fairy gold, he extended his scheme. He bought land as a collector buys gems, coins, and books, for its beauty and its historical associations: the Rhymer's Glen, "Turnagain"—the scene of the last Border clan battle—and so on. Once more, he made it his ideal to be the father and friend of all the people on his estate: to all men there

he spoke "as if he were of their blood-kindred." Their well-being was his first consideration. These are not ignoble motives, nor was it ignoble, in a child of an old line, to cherish the traditional Scottish ambition of re-uniting the Border name with Border lands. These three motives carried him beyond his own common-sense; he was intoxicated by his triumph, he reckoned the fairy gold of Constable's bills as real bullion. It was almost the solitary error of a life unexampled for the noblest and most attractive virtues. A little of the poet's vanity would have given him pause. Not esteeming his genius as prigs and poetasters do their own, not cherishing it with religious solemnity, he argued that he had a marketable commodity in his power of giving the highest pleasure, and he used that power as a marketable commodity, himself delighting in its exercise. Thus *Rokeby* was written for pleasure, and for money to buy a house and farm. But, like the fairies, his genius did not cross with ease that running water of the Tweed.

It was in the bustle of "flitting" from kindly Ashestiel to Clarty Hole,—the haugh now overcrowed by Galashiels manufacturers' villas, "pricking a cockney ear,"—that Scott began *Rokeby*, and, simultaneously, *The Bridal of Triermain*. Thus he played with his genius, for *Triermain* was to appear anonymously, and to be assigned to William Erskine. "Laying a trap for Jeffrey" was his delight, so much of a schoolboy was the great poet. Yet Mr. Morritt has chronicled his minute attention even to local botany at Rokeby.

The poem has little of the charm of its predecessors. It is too purely a novel, and, for a tale with a pirate's treasure in it, is not particularly interesting. The author set himself chiefly to delineate character, but octosyllabic verse is an ill medium for that purpose. Risingham is "a fine natural blackguard," and Matilda is drawn from Scott's first love; there are brilliant scenes of broil and fray, but there is a good deal of moralising; the scenery is not specially attractive (Lockhart could not care for it till he knew the localities); and, in brief, the poet's foot is no longer on his native heath. He was getting older, he says; something of his early fire had gone, and the critics who preferred *Rokeby* to *Marmion* and the *Lay*

did so merely because Scott had declined on something nearer their own standard of what poetry should be. The lyrics scattered here and there, however, are among his best, and his buccanier, at least, is immeasurably more a man of flesh and blood than Byron's moody and melodramatic corsairs. "He is within the keeping of Nature," as Scott wrote to Miss Baillie. "The book has gone off very bobbishly," says Scott to Mr. Morritt. But the success was not what it had been: the poem was a worse poem, the public was sated by imitations, and *Childe Harold* had taken the world by storm. *The Bridal of Triermain*, that humorous attempt on critical acuteness, was very well received; and the normal and natural mistakes were made by reviewers. A small part of it at first appeared, with other parodies by Scott, in the *Inferno of Altesidora*. A writer in *Blackwood* (1817) points out that the original portion is really much more an imitation of Coleridge. There may have been a change of purpose, during the construction of this elegant trifle, where Scott is only quite himself in the ringing Border lines:

> Bewcastle now must keep the hold,
> Speir-Adam's steeds must bide in stall.

Of *Don Roderick* little need be said; it is "an occasional poem," written for a charitable purpose. Scott was, finally, "clear of *The Lord of the Isles*" (a piece long contemplated, and prepared for) in January 1815, and two months later *Guy Mannering* came out, "the work of six weeks at Christmas time." The poem was concluded "unwillingly, and in haste," and in sadness caused by the death of the beautiful Duchess of Buccleuch. The result, as regards the public favour, was comparative disappointment. From Scott, on Bruce, more was expected than was received. Perhaps from early and happy memories of

> Inninmore,
> And green Loch Alline's woodland shore,

and the paradise of Ardtornish, the present writer has a strong partiality for the poem in which these delightful scenes are commemorated, with their ruined castles,

> Each on its own dark cape reclined,
> And listening to its own wild wind.

The versification returns to the bright variety of the *Lay:*

> And Morven's echoes answer well,
> And Duart hears the distant swell
> Come down the darksome Sound.

The description of the "sea-fire" is beautiful, and best to be appreciated by those who know its lambent light on the "darksome Sound" of Mull. Whether taken as a study of Bruce, or as illustrious for the knightly chivalry of the fight at Bannockburn, and the glorious death of Argentine, "charging an army there" alone—like Keppoch at Culloden—*The Lord of the Isles* seems eminently worthy of the author of *Marmion*. The private novel of the affections, which meanders through the real interest of the piece, is, not unfortunately, the last of such essays by Scott in a bastard and hopeless *genre*. Scott withdrew from the field of narrative poetry before Byron, never being able to see, through the dazzling glamour of his generosity, what Lockhart saw plainly enough, that "Byron owed at least half his success to clever, though perhaps unconscious, imitation of himself." Byron, for his part, showed scarcely less generosity. Scott, he says, only ceased to be popular, "because the vulgar learned were tired of hearing 'Aristides called the Just,' and Scott the Best, and ostracised him." His "Waterloo," published for a patriotic purpose, had a temporary vogue, in spite of epigrams,—

> But none, by sabre or by shot,
> Fell half so flat as Walter Scott.

His cavalry charge is brilliant, his simile of the torrent, applied to Napoleon, is original, and deserves the praise of Lockhart. The taunt levelled against the emperor for not doing what neither Charles I. did at his last fight, nor Prince Charles at Culloden—for not heading a hopeless charge and dying sword in hand—seems less than generous. Napoleon was outworn with a painful malady; he was not, physically, the man of the Bridge of Lodi; and, while he had life, he had faith in his star; he did not die like Catiline—monarchs rarely do. At Waterloo, England and Prussia defeated but a shadow of the Napoleon that once had been, and "God will have a stroke in every battle."

Great as a narrative poet, always rising with his theme, Scott is greater as a lyrist. He had still to pour forth, in his novels, his best songs—joyous, musical, strange, or wild with the madness of Meg Merrilies; it was when he had long left the companionship of the Muse that he made his one moan of self-pity, in "The sun upon the Weirdlaw Hill"; it was when another would have been crushed by labour and anxiety that he wrote the immortal cavalier chant of "Bonnie Dundee" (Dec. 22, 1825) and the song of Wildrake—

*Here's to honour and faith,*
*And a health to King Charles!*

Yet, in the year of *Woodstock*, and of his ruin, when he recovered his old *verve* in "Bonnie Dundee," he says, "Can't say what made me take a frisk so uncommon of late years, as to write verses of free-will." Not precisely of free-will, perhaps, but from the kind constraint of good feeling, he wrote "Glengarry's Death-Song" (1828), published for the first time in *Blackwood's* (Sept. 1893). In his very latest days at Rome, when he had nothing left, he says, but to be good-natured, he penned for a Russian lady's album the lines which have since been printed from a rough draught, picked up and treasured by his valet. They show the old love of native land, and have something of the old melody. But—

Alas, the warped and broken board,
How can it bear the painter's dye?
The harp of strain'd and tuneless chord,
How to the minstrel's hand reply?

There is but a melancholy interest in such final essays; they belong rather to the biography than to the poetry of Scott. As late as the writing of *The Fair Maid of Perth*, which contains a beautiful dirge, and as beautiful a cradle-song, with the ditty of poor Louise, the harp was not unstrung, but the minstrel rarely handled the instrument.

Were but one fragment of all Scott's poetry left, had the rest perished, like Sappho's, in the changes of things, and were the surviving fragment "Proud Maisie," enough would endure to give the world assurance of a great poet. But that marvellous gem, bright as spring and youth,

and sad as death, would tell us little about the poet's predominant qualities. Among his pieces it is the most inspired, and, consequently, has least of his ordinary self. If, again, nothing was left to us but Elspeth's ballad of the Red Harlaw, we could be assured of the existence of the very greatest of ballad poets. "Nora's Vow" and "Jock of Hazeldean," once more, reveal to us one who is what Praed might have been, had Praed been a Scot and a poet. The woodland lyrics of *Rokeby* show us Scott in his happiest normal mood—full of the joy of Nature, and the thought of a free roving life. The snatches of Madge Wildfire place him on a level with the Shakspeare who created Ophelia. Thus various is the Muse of the great writer who was so limited, as a lyrist, by the very nobility and selflessness of his character. Of his own passions and pains, of his love and grief and joy, he simply will not sing, yet these experiences are the staple of the lyrist. We cannot imagine an elegiac Scott: from him no *In Memoriam* was to be looked for, and he never unlocks his heart, like Shakspeare, with the key of the sonnet. His most intimate emotions are to him too sacred for public utterance; or again he takes Montaigne's advice to "make no great marvel of our own fortunes," and so he never produces himself as his theme. There was no such reticence in Byron, in Shelley, in Tennyson, in Burns. Their hearts were worn on their sleeves, fortunately for lovers of poetry; not so was Scott's. Probably he had not much sympathy with poetical exposures of the self: he remarks that, of Italian poets, Ariosto was always his favourite, and he scarcely hides his contempt for Petrarch and those who "Petrarchise." These ideas rather increase our sympathy for the man; they necessarily limit the poet, and the public vogue of the poet.

Contemporary with Scott, and in the generations that followed Scott, were great writers in all respects unlike him. There was the contemplative Wordsworth, a mystic, though a patriot and a very honest man; there was the inspired Coleridge, with his wonderful year of magic unapproachable; there was Shelley, "the meteoric poet," all air and fire; there was Keats, with the subtlest sense of beauty, stripping Nature to her inmost secret of loveli-

ness, as his friend, John Hamilton Reynolds, bids us strip a rosebud to its delicate central petals. All these, with the Virgilian genius of Tennyson, had the supreme command of the mystery of words; form and thought are at one with them, and combine to produce an incommunicable and inexplicable pleasure in the reader. But in Scott the spell is wrought less mystically, by sheer high heart and gallant spirit, by pure delight in what is honest, loyal, fair, heroic, and of good report. In hills and woods and streams he finds nothing "far more deeply interfused," no message from the informing soul of the world, but he is inspired by the manifest, obvious, outward beauty, and by memories of old loves, wars, feuds, and forays. Just as the great world puts away childish things, and plunges into the conflict for actual existence, Scott is born to remember and revive all the things of the world's youth—lady, knight, and dwarf, magician and warrior. Each poet makes his own paradise and place apart; Scott's is a paradise of loyal memories. Exactly like Homer, he lives in the enchanted heroic past: he reverts to a taste primitive and, as we fondly hope, essentially immortal. He is like the Fijian story-tellers, who "seek to entertain the chiefs," as one of them says. "These will tell of gods and giants, and canoes greater than the mountains, and of women fairer than the women of these days, and of doings so strange that the jaws of the listener fall apart. Such an one gains great honour."[1]

"Great honour" Scott won, and great *nambu* (poetic reward), and renown he is never likely to lose, though taste varies with the times. Love, too, he has won from all men of heart; in his latest volume Lord Tennyson paid his brief and pregnant tribute to the dead magician. Scott's narrative poems, despite the reckless style and the inherent, inevitable defects of the love-novel in rhyme, are probably even now more read than any other long narrative poems in the language. One of Scott's friends remarked that of all tales in verse the *Odyssey* was the only one which he would not have preferred in prose. For the *Lay*, at least, another exception must be made, even by the most fastidious, though it is undeniable

[1] Basil Thomson, *South-Sea Yarns*, p. 11. London, 1894.

that *Rokeby* would be infinitely preferable out of verse. "Bertram, however roughly sketched, is a figure alive to the very finger-tips," as Mr. Swinburne says, and we long to see him in prose, released from the duty of moving to the by no means "majestic law" of octosyllabics. We grudge the absence, in fact, of one of the best of the Waverley Novels. No doubt Scott's prose has been the most potent rival of his rhyme. But his rhyme (dearly as he loves the enchantress to whom he bade so touching a farewell) never found, among men of taste and wit, so severe a censor as it found in himself. Of himself alone he was a sharp and not a generous critic. A poet without one touch of the innumerable things evil in the poetic temperament, without envy, jealousy, vanity, and with a strong sense of humour, Scott stands eternally in his own light. For, great as a writer of verse, greater as a creator in prose, great as a student, he is so infinitely best and greatest as a man, that our admiration of the poet is lost and swallowed up in our love of the Sheriff of the Forest, the Laird of Abbotsford and Kaeside.

How often among the frets and petty trials which the life of letters brings even to its humblest followers; how often in the needless interruptions to thought and work, or under the assaults of pertinacious, incompetent people, have we cause to remember the example of Sir Walter. He allowed no vexation to ruffle him; he never turned the deaf ear and the surly back on the innumerable mindless and ruthless pests who thrust themselves into every study, and murder precious time by their letters, their interested compliments, their petitions, and their complaints. If we cannot have his unexampled genius, his unwearied tolerance is, at least, an ideal that we should aspire towards; his kindness is a model which should never be absent from our gaze; his brave contempt of trifles, his indifference to the unessential, his humble estimate of self, his joy in the success of others—these are qualities immortal and immortally worthy of imitation and admiration.

A. L.

# SELECTED
# LYRICS AND BALLADS

## THE VIOLET *

The violet in her greenwood bower,
Where birchen boughs with hazels mingle,
May boast itself the fairest flower
In glen, or copse, or forest dingle.

Though fair her gems of azure hue,
Beneath the dewdrop's weight reclining;
I've seen an eye of lovelier hue,
More sweet through wat'ry lustre shining.

The summer sun that dew shall dry
Ere yet the day be past its morrow;
Nor longer in my false love's eye
Remain'd the tear of parting sorrow.

## TO A LADY *

### WITH FLOWERS FROM A ROMAN WALL

Take these flowers which, purple waving,
On the ruin'd rampart grew,
Where, the sons of freedom braving,
Rome's imperial standards flew.
Warriors from the breach of danger
Pluck no longer laurels there;
They but yield the passing stranger
Wild-flower wreaths for Beauty's hair.

* See Editor's notes at end of Poems.



24

## THE RESOLVE*

IN IMITATION OF AN OLD ENGLISH POEM

My wayward fate I needs must plain,
Though bootless be the theme:
I loved, and was beloved again,
Yet all was but a dream;
For, as her love was quickly got,
So it was quickly gone;
No more I'll bask in flame so hot,
But coldly dwell alone.

Not maid more bright than maid was e'er
My fancy shall beguile,
By flattering word or feigned tear,
By gesture, look, or smile:
No more I'll call the shaft fair shot
Till it has fairly flown,
Nor scorch me at a flame so hot;—
I'll rather freeze alone.

Each ambush'd Cupid I'll defy,
In cheek, or chin, or brow,
And deem the glance of woman's eye
As weak as woman's vow:
I'll lightly hold the lady's heart,
That is but lightly won;
I'll steel my breast to beauty's art,
And learn to live alone.

The flaunting torch soon blazes out,
The diamond's ray abides;
The flame its glory hurls about,
The gem its lustre hides:
Such gem I fondly deem'd was mine,
And glowed a diamond stone,
But, since each eye may see it shine,
I'll darkling dwell alone.

No waking dream shall tinge my thought
With dyes so bright and vain,
No silken net, so slightly wrought,
Shall tangle me again:
No more I'll pay so dear for wit,
I'll live upon mine own;
Nor shall wild passion trouble it,—
I'll rather dwell alone.

And thus I'll hush my heart to rest,—
"Thy loving labour's lost;
Thou shalt no more be widely blest,
To be so strangely crost;
The widow'd turtles mateless die,
The phœnix is but one;
They seek no loves—no more will I—
I'll rather dwell alone."

## FLORA MACIVOR'S SONG *

From *Waverley*

(1745)

There is mist on the mountain, and night on the vale,
But more dark is the sleep of the sons of the Gael.
A stranger commanded—it sunk on the land,
It has frozen each heart, and benumb'd every hand!

The dirk and the target lie sordid with dust,
The bloodless claymore is but redden'd with rust;
On the hill or the glen if a gun should appear,
It is only to war with the heath-cock or deer.

The deeds of our sires if our bards should rehearse,
Let a blush or a blow be the meed of their verse!
Be mute every string, and be hush'd every tone,
That shall bid us remember the fame that is flown.

But the dark hours of night and of slumber are past,
The morn on our mountains is dawning at last;
Glenaladale's peaks are illumed with the rays,
And the streams of Glenfinnan leap bright in the blaze.

O high-minded Moray!—the exiled—the dear!—
In the blush of the dawning the STANDARD up-rear!
Wide, wide on the winds of the north let it fly,
Like the sun's latest flash when the tempest is nigh!

Ye sons of the strong, when that dawning shall break,
Need the harp of the aged remind you to wake?
That dawn never beam'd on your forefathers' eye,
But it roused each high chieftain to vanquish or die.

O sprung from the Kings who in Islay kept state,
Proud chiefs of Clan-Ranald, Glengary, and Sleat!
Combine like three streams from one mountain of snow,
And resistless in union rush down on the foe.

True son of Sir Evan, undaunted Lochiel,
Place thy targe on thy shoulder and burnish thy steel!
Rough Keppoch, give breath to thy bugle's bold swell,
Till far Coryarrick resound to the knell!

Stern son of Lord Kenneth, high chief of Kintail,
Let the stag in thy standard bound wild in the gale!
May the race of Clan-Gillian, the fearless and free,
Remember Glenlivat, Harlaw, and Dundee!

Let the clan of grey Fingon, whose offspring has given
Such heroes to earth, and such martyrs to heaven,
Unite with the race of renown'd Rorri More,
To launch the long galley, and stretch to the oar.

How Mac-Shimei will joy when their chief shall display
The yew-crested bonnet o'er tresses of grey!
How the race of wrong'd Alpine and murder'd Glencoe
Shall shout for revenge when they pour on the foe!

Ye sons of brown Dermid, who slew the wild boar,
Resume the pure faith of the great Callum-More!
Mac-Niel of the Islands, and Moy of the Lake,
For honour, for freedom, for vengeance awake!

Awake on your hills, on your islands awake,
Brave sons of the mountain, the frith, and the lake!
'Tis the bugle—but not for the chase is the call;
'Tis the pibroch's shrill summons—but not to the hall.

'Tis the summons of heroes for conquest or death,
When the banners are blazing on mountain and heath;
They call to the dirk, the claymore, and the targe,
To the march and the muster, the line and the charge.

Be the brand of each chieftain like Fin's in his ire!
May the blood through his veins flow like currents of fire!
Burst the base foreign yoke as your sires did of yore!
Or die, like your sires, and endure it no more!

## BONNY DUNDEE*

To the Lords of Convention 'twas Claver'se who spoke,
"Ere the King's crown shall fall there are crowns to be broke;
So let each Cavalier who loves honour and me,
Come follow the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.

"Come fill up my cup, come fill up my can,
Come saddle your horses, and call up your men;
Come open the West Port, and let me gang free,
And it's room for the bonnets of Bonny Dundee!"

Dundee he is mounted, he rides up the street,
The bells are rung backward, the drums they are beat;
But the Provost, douce man, said, "Just e'en let him be,
The Gude Town is weel quit of that Deil of Dundee."
Come fill up my cup, etc.

As he rode down the sanctified bends of the Bow,
Ilk carline was flyting and shaking her pow;
But the young plants of grace they look'd couthie and slee,
Thinking, luck to thy bonnet, thou Bonny Dundee!
Come fill up my cup, etc.

With sour-featured Whigs the Grassmarket was cramm'd
As if half the West had set tryst to be hang'd;
There was spite in each look, there was fear in each e'e,
As they watch'd for the bonnets of Bonny Dundee.
Come fill up my cup, etc.

These cowls of Kilmarnock had spits and had spears,
And lang-hafted gullies to kill Cavaliers;
But they shrunk to close-heads, and the causeway was free,
At the toss of the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.
Come fill up my cup, etc.

He spurr'd to the foot of the proud Castle rock,
And with the gay Gordon he gallantly spoke:
"Let Mons Meg and her marrows speak twa words or three,
For the love of the bonnet of Bonny Dundee."
Come fill up my cup, etc.

The Gordon demands of him which way he goes—
"Where'er shall direct me the shade of Montrose!
Your Grace in short space shall hear tidings of me,
Or that low lies the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.
Come fill up my cup, etc.

"There are hills beyond Pentland, and lands beyond Forth,
If there's lords in the Lowlands, there's chiefs in the North;
There are wild Duniwassals three thousand times three,
Will cry *hoigh!* for the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.
Come fill up my cup, etc.

"There's brass on the target of barken'd bull-hide;
There's steel in the scabbard that dangles beside:
The brass shall be burnish'd, the steel shall flash free,
At a toss of the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.
Come fill up my cup, etc.

"Away to the hills, to the caves, to the rocks—
Ere I own an usurper, I'll couch with the fox;
And tremble, false Whigs, in the midst of your glee,
You have not seen the last of my bonnet and me!"
Come fill up my cup, etc.

He waved his proud hand, and the trumpets were blown,
The kettle-drums clash'd and the horsemen rode on,
Till on Ravelston's cliffs and on Clermiston's lee
Died away the wild war-notes of Bonny Dundee.

Come fill up my cup, come fill up my can,
Come saddle the horses and call up the men,
Come open your gates, and let me gae free,
For it's up with the bonnets of Bonny Dundee!

## ON THE MASSACRE OF GLENCOE

"O TELL me, Harper, wherefore flow
Thy wayward notes of wail and woe,
Far down the desert of Glencoe,
Where none may list their melody?
Say, harp'st thou to the mists that fly,
Or to the dun-deer glancing by,
Or to the eagle, that from high
Screams chorus to thy minstrelsy?"—

"No, not to these, for they have rest,—
The mist-wreath has the mountain-crest,
The stag his lair, the erne her nest,
Abode of lone security.
But those for whom I pour the lay,
Not wild-wood deep, nor mountain grey,
Not this deep dell, that shrouds from day,
Could screen from treach'rous cruelty.

"Their flag was furl'd, and mute their drum,
The very household dogs were dumb,
Unwont to bay at guests that come
In guise of hospitality.
His blithest notes the piper plied,
Her gayest snood the maiden tied,
The dame her distaff flung aside,
To tend her kindly housewifery.

"The hand that mingled in the meal
At midnight drew the felon steel,
And gave the host's kind breast to feel
Meed for his hospitality!

The friendly hearth which warm'd that hand
At midnight arm'd it with the brand
That bade destruction's flames expand
  Their red and fearful blazonry.

"Then woman's shriek was heard in vain,
Nor infancy's unpitied plain,
More than the warrior's groan, could gain
  Respite from ruthless butchery!
The winter wind that whistled shrill,
The snows that night that cloked the hill,
Though wild and pitiless, had still
  Far more than Southern clemency.

"Long have my harp's best notes been gone,
Few are its strings, and faint their tone,
They can but sound in desert lone
  Their grey-hair'd master's misery.
Were each grey hair a minstrel string,
Each chord should imprecations fling,
Till startled Scotland loud should ring,
  'Revenge for blood and treachery!'"

## TO AN OAK TREE*

From *Waverley*

Emblem of England's ancient faith,
  Full proudly may thy branches wave,
Where loyalty lies low in death,
  And valour fills a timeless grave.

And thou, brave tenant of the tomb!
  Repine not if our clime deny,
Above thine honour'd sod to bloom,
  The flowrets of a milder sky.

These owe their birth to genial May,
  Beneath a fiercer sun they pine,
Before the winter storm decay—
  And can their worth be type of thine?

No! for, 'mid storms of Fate opposing,
Still higher swell'd thy dauntless heart,
And, while Despair the scene was closing,
Commenced thy brief but brilliant part.

'Twas then thou sought'st on Albyn's hill
(When England's sons the strife resign'd,)
A rugged race resisting still,
And unsubdued though unrefined.

Thy death's hour heard no kindred wail,
No holy knell thy requiem rung;
Thy mourners were the plaided Gael,
Thy dirge the clamorous pibroch sung.

Yet who, in Fortune's summer-shine
To waste life's longest term away,
Would change that glorious dawn of thine,
Though darken'd ere its noontide day?

Be thine the Tree whose dauntless boughs
Brave summer's drought and winter's gloom!
Rome bound with oak her patriots' brows,
As Albyn shadows Wogan's tomb.

## GLEE FOR KING CHARLES

From *Woodstock*

Bring the bowl which you boast,
Fill it up to the brim;
'Tis to him we love most,
And to all who love him.
Brave gallants, stand up,
And avaunt, ye base carles!
Were there death in the cup,
Here's a health to King Charles!

Though he wanders through dangers,
Unaided, unknown,
Dependent on strangers,
Estranged from his own;

Though 'tis under our breath,
Amidst forfeits and perils,
Here's to honour and faith,
And a health to King Charles!

Let such honours abound
As the time can afford,
The knee on the ground,
And the hand on the sword;
But the time shall come round,
When, 'mid Lords, Dukes, and Earls,
The loud trumpets shall sound
Here's a health to King Charles!

## MAJOR BELLENDEN'S SONG

From *Old Mortality*

And what though winter will pinch severe
Through locks of grey and a cloak that's old,
Yet keep up thy heart, bold cavalier,
For a cup of sack shall fence the cold.

For time will rust the brightest blade,
And years will break the strongest bow;
Was never wight so starkly made,
But time and years would overthrow!

## MAISIE

From *The Heart of Midlothian*

Proud Maisie is in the wood,
Walking so early;
Sweet Robin sits on the bush,
Singing so rarely.

"Tell me, thou bonny bird,
When shall I marry me?"—
"When six braw gentlemen
Kirkward shall carry ye."

"Who makes the bridal bed,
Birdie, say truly?"—
"The grey-headed sexton
That delves the grave duly.

"The glow-worm o'er grave and stone
Shall light thee steady;
The owl from the steeple sing,
'Welcome, proud lady.'"

## LUCY ASHTON'S SONG

From *The Bride of Lammermoor*

Look not thou on beauty's charming,—
Sit thou still when kings are arming,—
Taste not when the wine-cup glistens,—
Speak not when the people listens,—
Stop thine ear against the singer,—
From the red gold keep thy finger,—
Vacant heart, and hand, and eye,
Easy live and quiet die.

## "TWIST YE, TWINE YE"

From *Guy Mannering*

(MEG MERRILIES' SONG)

Twist ye, twine ye! even so,
Mingle shades of joy and woe,
Hope, and fear, and peace, and strife,
In the thread of human life.

Whilst the mystic twist is spinning,
And the infant's life beginning,
Dimly seen through twilight bending,
Lo, what varied shapes attending!

Passions wild, and follies vain,
Pleasures soon exchanged for pain;
Doubt, and jealousy, and fear,
In the magic dance appear.

Now they wax, and now they dwindle,
Whirling with the whirling spindle.
Twist ye, twine ye! even so,
Mingle human bliss and woe.—

## YOUTH AND AGE

From *Waverley*

YOUNG men will love thee more fair and more fast;
*Heard ye so merry the little bird sing?*
Old men's love the longest will last,
*And the throstle-cock's head is under his wing.*

The young man's wrath is like light straw on fire;
*Heard ye so merry the little bird sing?*
But like red-hot steel is the old man's ire,
*And the throstle-cock's head is under his wing.*

The young man will brawl at the evening board;
*Heard ye so merry the little bird sing?*
But the old man will draw at the dawning the sword,
*And the throstle-cock's head is under his wing.*

## FALSE LOVE

From *Waverley*

FALSE love, and hast thou play'd me this
In summer among the flowers?
I will repay thee back again
In winter among the showers.
Unless again, again, my love,
Unless you turn again;
As you with other maidens rove,
I'll smile on other men.

## REBECCA'S HYMN

From *Ivanhoe*

When Israel, of the Lord beloved,
Out from the land of bondage came,
Her fathers' God before her moved,
An awful guide in smoke and flame.
By day, along the astonish'd lands
The clouded pillar glided slow;
By night, Arabia's crimson'd sands
Return'd the fiery column's glow.

There rose the choral hymn of praise,
And trump and timbrel answer'd keen,
And Zion's daughters pour'd their lays,
With priest's and warrior's voice between.
No portents now our foes amaze,
Forsaken Israel wanders lone:
Our fathers would not know Thy ways,
And Thou hast left them to their own.

But present still, though now unseen!
When brightly shines the prosperous day,
Be thoughts of Thee a cloudy screen
To temper the deceitful ray.
And oh, when stoops on Judah's path
In shade and storm the frequent night,
Be Thou, long-suffering, slow to wrath,
A burning and a shining light!

Our harps we left by Babel's streams,
The tyrant's jest, the Gentile's scorn;
No censer round our altar beams,
And mute are timbrel, harp, and horn.
But Thou hast said, The blood of goat,
The flesh of rams I will not prize;
A contrite heart, a humble thought,
Are mine accepted sacrifice.

## AS LORDS THEIR LABOURERS' HIRE DELAY

From *Redgauntlet*

As lords their labourers' hire delay,
  Fate quits our toil with hopes to come,
Which, if far short of present pay,
  Still owns a debt and names a sum.

Quit not the pledge, frail sufferer, then,
  Although a distant date be given;
Despair is treason towards man,
  And blasphemy to Heaven.

## SONG

From *The Betrothed*

THE TRUTH OF WOMAN

Woman's faith, and woman's trust—
Write the characters in dust;
Stamp them on the running stream,
Print them on the moon's pale beam,
And each evanescent letter
Shall be clearer, firmer, better,
And more permanent, I ween,
Than the thing those letters mean.

I have strain'd the spider's thread
'Gainst the promise of a maid;
I have weigh'd a grain of sand
'Gainst her plight of heart and hand;
I told my true love of the token,
How her faith proved light, and her word was broken:
Again her word and truth she plight,
And I believed them again ere night.

## ONE HOUR WITH THEE

Song of Charles II. in *Woodstock*

An hour with thee!—When earliest day
Dapples with gold the eastern grey,
Oh, what can frame my mind to bear
The toil and turmoil, cark and care,
New griefs, which coming hours unfold
And sad remembrance of the old?
One hour with thee!

One hour with thee!—When burning June
Waves his red flag at pitch of noon,
What shall repay the faithful swain
His labour on the sultry plain,
And, more than cave or sheltering bough,
Cool feverish blood, and throbbing brow?—
One hour with thee!

One hour with thee!—When sun is set,
O, what can teach me to forget
The thankless labours of the day;
The hopes, the wishes, flung away;
The increasing wants and lessening gains,
The master's pride who scorns my pains?—
One hour with thee!

## SONG

From *Quentin Durward*

COUNTY GUY

Ah! County Guy, the hour is nigh,
The sun has left the lea,
The orange flower perfumes the bower,
The breeze is on the sea.

The lark, his lay who thrill'd all day,
Sits hush'd his partner nigh;
Breeze, bird, and flower, confess the hour,
But where is County Guy?—

The village maid steals through the shade,
Her shepherd's suit to hear;
To beauty shy, by lattice high,
Sings high-born Cavalier.
The star of Love, all stars above,
Now reigns o'er earth and sky;
And high and low the influence know—
But where is County Guy!

## THE LAY OF POOR LOUISE

From *The Fair Maid of Perth*

Ah, poor Louise! The livelong day
She roams from cot to castle gay;
And still her voice and viol say,
Ah, maids, beware the woodland way,
Think on Louise.

Ah, poor Louise! The sun was high,
It smirch'd her cheek, it dimm'd her eye.
The woodland walk was cool and nigh,
Where birds with chiming streamlets vie
To cheer Louise.

Ah, poor Louise! The savage bear
Made ne'er that lovely grove his lair;
The wolves molest not paths so fair—
But better far had such been there
For poor Louise.

Ah, poor Louise! In woody wold
She met a huntsman fair and bold;
His baldric was of silk and gold,
And many a witching tale he told
To poor Louise.

Ah, poor Louise! Small cause to pine
Hadst thou for treasures of the mine;
For peace of mind, that gift divine,
And spotless innocence, were thine,
Ah, poor Louise.

Ah, poor Louise! Thy treasure's reft!
I know not if by force or theft,
Or part by violence, part by gift;
But misery is all that's left
To poor Louise.

Let poor Louise some succour have!
She will not long your bounty crave,
Or tire the gay with warning stave—
For Heaven has grace, and earth a grave
For poor Louise.

## YES, THOU MAYEST SIGH

From *The Fair Maid of Perth*

Yes, thou mayest sigh,
And look once more at all around,
At stream and bank, and sky and ground,
Thy life its final course has found,
And thou must die.

Yes, lay thee down,
And while thy struggling pulses flutter,
Bid the grey monk his soul mass mutter,
And the deep bell its death-tone utter—
Thy life is gone.

Be not afraid.
'Tis but a pang and then a thrill,
A fever fit, and then a chill;
And then an end of human ill,
For thou art dead.

## HUNTING SONG *

Waken, lords and ladies gay,
On the mountain dawns the day,
All the jolly chase is here,
With hawk, and horse, and hunting-spear!
Hounds are in their couples yelling,
Hawks are whistling, horns are knelling,
Merrily, merrily, mingle they,
"Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Waken, lords and ladies gay,
The mist has left the mountain grey,
Springlets in the dawn are steaming,
Diamonds on the brake are gleaming:
And foresters have busy been,
To track the buck in thicket green;
Now we come to chant our lay,
"Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Waken, lords and ladies gay,
To the greenwood haste away;
We can show you where he lies,
Fleet of foot, and tall of size;
We can show the marks he made,
When 'gainst the oak his antlers fray'd;
You shall see him brought to bay,
"Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Louder, louder, chant the lay,
Waken, lords and ladies gay!
Tell them youth, and mirth, and glee,
Run a course as well as we;
Time, stern huntsman! who can baulk,
Stanch as hound, and fleet as hawk:
Think of this, and rise with day,
Gentle lords and ladies gay.

## THE DYING GIPSY'S DIRGE

From *Guy Mannering*

Wasted, weary, wherefore stay,
Wrestling thus with earth and clay?
From the body pass away;—
Hark! the mass is singing.

From thee doff thy mortal weed,
Mary Mother be thy speed,
Saints to help thee at thy need;—
Hark! the knell is ringing.

Fear not snow-drift driving fast,
Sleet, or hail, or levin blast;
Soon the shroud shall lap thee fast,
And the sleep be on thee cast
That shall ne'er know waking.

Haste thee, haste thee, to be gone,
Earth flits fast, and time draws on,—
Gasp thy gasp, and groan thy groan,
Day is near the breaking.

## JOCK O' HAZELDEAN

"Why weep ye by the tide, ladie?
Why weep ye by the tide?
I'll wed ye to my youngest son,
And ye sall be his bride.
And ye sall be his bride, ladie,
Sae comely to be seen"—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock o' Hazeldean.

"Now let this wilfu' grief be done,
And dry that cheek so pale;
Young Frank is chief of Errington,
And lord of Langley-dale;
His step is first in peaceful ha',
His sword in battle keen"—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock o' Hazeldean.

"A chain of gold ye sall not lack,
Nor braid to bind your hair;
Nor mettled hound, nor managed hawk,
Nor palfrey fresh and fair;
And you, the foremost o' them a',
Shall ride our forest queen"—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock o' Hazeldean.

The kirk was deck'd at morning-tide,
The tapers glimmer'd fair;
The priest and bridegroom wait the bride,
And dame and knight are there.
They sought her baith by bower and ha';
The ladie was not seen!
She's o'er the Border, and awa'
Wi' Jock o' Hazeldean.

## NORA'S VOW

Hear what Highland Nora said—
"The Earlie's son I will not wed,
Should all the race of nature die,
And none be left but he and I.
For all the gold, for all the gear,
And all the lands both far and near,
That ever valour lost or won,
I would not wed the Earlie's son."—

"A maiden's vows," old Callum spoke,
"Are lightly made and lightly broke;
The heather on the mountain's height
Begins to bloom in purple light;
The frost-wind soon shall sweep away
That lustre deep from glen and brae;
Yet Nora, ere its bloom be gone,
May blithely wed the Earlie's son."—

"The swan," she said, "the lake's clear breast
May barter for the eagle's nest;
The Awe's fierce stream may backward turn,
Ben-Cruaichan fall, and crush Kilchurn;
Our kilted clans, when blood is high,
Before their foes may turn and fly;
But I, were all these marvels done,
Would never wed the Earlie's son!"

Still in the water-lily's shade
Her wonted nest the wild-swan made;
Ben-Cruaichan stands as fast as ever,
Still downward foams the Awe's fierce river;
To shun the clash of foeman's steel,
No Highland brogue has turned the heel;
But Nora's heart is lost and won,
—She's wedded to the Earlie's son!

## VERSES FOUND IN BOTHWELL'S POCKET-BOOK

From *Old Mortality*

Thy hue, dear pledge, is pure and bright,
As in that well-remember'd night,
When first thy mystic braid was wove,
And first my Agnes whisper'd love.

Since then how often hast thou press'd
The torrid zone of this wild breast,
Whose wrath and hate have sworn to dwell
With the first sin which peopled hell.
A breast whose blood's a troubled ocean,
Each throb the earthquake's wild commotion!—
O, if such clime thou canst endure,
Yet keep thy hue unstain'd and pure,
What conquest o'er each erring thought
Of that fierce realm had Agnes wrought!
I had not wander'd wild and wide,
With such an angel for my guide;
Nor heaven nor earth could then reprove me,
If she had lived, and lived to love me.

Not then this world's wild joys had been
To me one savage hunting scene,
My sole delight the headlong race,
And frantic hurry of the chase;
To start, pursue, and bring to bay,
Rush in, drag down, and rend my prey,
Then—from the carcase turn away!
Mine ireful mood had sweetness tamed,
And sooth'd each wound which pride inflam'd!
Yes, God and man might now approve me,
If thou hadst lived, and lived to love me.

## THE SUN UPON THE WEIRDLAW HILL*

The sun upon the Weirdlaw Hill,
In Ettrick's vale, is sinking sweet;
The westland wind is hush and still,
The lake lies sleeping at my feet.
Yet not the landscape to mine eye
Bears those bright hues that once it bore;
Though evening, with her richest dye,
Flames o'er the hills of Ettrick's shore.

With listless look along the plain,
I see Tweed's silver current glide,
And coldly mark the holy fane
Of Melrose rise in ruin'd pride.
The quiet lake, the balmy air,
The hill, the stream, the tower, the tree,—
Are they still such as once they were?
Or is the dreary change in me?

Alas, the warp'd and broken board,
How can it bear the painter's dye!
The harp of strain'd and tuneless chord,
How to the minstrel's skill reply!
To aching eyes each landscape lowers,
To feverish pulse each gale blows chill;
And Araby's or Eden's bowers
Were barren as this moorland hill.

## CLEVELAND'S SONG *

From *The Pirate*

Farewell! farewell! the voice you hear,
Has left its last soft tone with you,—
Its next must join the seaward cheer,
And shout among the shouting crew.

The accents which I scarce could form
Beneath your frown's controlling check,
Must give the word, above the storm,
To cut the mast, and clear the wreck.

The timid eye I dared not raise,—
The hand, that shook when press'd to thine,
Must point the guns upon the chase—
Must bid the deadly cutlass shine.

To all I love, or hope, or fear,—
Honour, or own, a long adieu!
To all that life has soft and dear,
Farewell! save memory of you!

## BORDER BALLAD

From *The Monastery*

March, march, Ettrick and Teviotdale,
Why the deil dinna ye march forward in order?
March, march, Eskdale and Liddesdale,
All the Blue Bonnets are bound for the Border.
Many a banner spread,
Flutters above your head,
Many a crest that is famous in story.
Mount and make ready then,
Sons of the mountain glen,
Fight for the Queen and our old Scottish glory.

Come from the hills where your hirsels are grazing,
Come from the glen of the buck and the roe;
Come to the crag where the beacon is blazing,
Come with the buckler, the lance, and the bow.
Trumpets are sounding,
War-steeds are bounding,
Stand to your arms, and march in good order,
England shall many a day
Tell of the bloody fray,
When the Blue Bonnets came over the Border.

## ON ETTRICK FOREST'S MOUNTAINS DUN

Written in 1822

On Ettrick Forest's mountains dun,
'Tis blithe to hear the sportsman's gun,
And seek the heath-frequenting brood
Far through the noonday solitude;
By many a cairn and trenched mound,
Where chiefs of yore sleep lone and sound,
And springs, where grey-hair'd shepherds tell,
That still the fairies love to dwell.

Along the silver streams of Tweed,
'Tis blithe the mimic fly to lead,
When to the hook the salmon springs,
And the line whistles through the rings;
The boiling eddy see him try,
Then dashing from the current high,
Till watchful eye and cautious hand
Have led his wasted strength to land.

'Tis blithe along the midnight tide,
With stalwart arm the boat to guide;
On high the dazzling blaze to rear,
And heedful plunge the barbed spear;
Rock, wood, and scaur, emerging bright,
Fling on the stream their ruddy light,
And from the bank our band appears
Like Genii, arm'd with fiery spears.

'Tis blithe at eve to tell the tale,
How we succeed, and how we fail,
Whether at Alwyn's lordly meal,
Or lowlier board of Ashestiel;
While the gay tapers cheerly shine,
Bickers the fire, and flows the wine—
Days free from thought, and nights from care,
My blessing on the Forest fair!

## HARVEST HOME

From *The Heart of Midlothian*

Our work is over—over now,
The goodman wipes his weary brow,
The last long wain wends slow away,
And we are free to sport and play.
The night comes on when sets the sun,
And labour ends when day is done.
When Autumn's gone, and Winter's come,
We hold our jovial harvest home.

When the fight of grace is fought,—
When the marriage vest is wrought,—
When Faith has chased cold Doubt away,—
And Hope but sickens at delay,—
When Charity, imprisoned here,—
Longs for a more expanded sphere;
Doff thy robe of sin and clay;
Christian, rise, and come away.

# BALLADS

## THE EVE OF ST. JOHN

The Baron of Smaylho'me * rose with day,
He spurr'd his courser on,
Without stop or stay down the rocky way,
That leads to Brotherstone.

He went not with the bold Buccleuch,
His banner broad to rear ;
He went not 'gainst the English yew,
To lift the Scottish spear.

Yet his plate-jack was braced, and his helmet was laced,
And his vaunt-brace of proof he wore :
At his saddle-gerthe was a good steel sperthe,
Full ten pound weight and more.

The Baron return'd in three days space,
And his looks were sad and sour ;
And weary was his courser's pace,
As he reach'd his rocky tower.

He came not from where Ancram Moor
Ran red with English blood ;
Where the Douglas true, and the bold Buccleuch
'Gainst keen Lord Evers stood.

Yet was his helmet hack'd and hew'd,
His acton pierced and tore,
His axe and his dagger with blood imbrued,—
But it was not English gore.

He lighted at the Chapellage;
He held him close and still;
And he whistled thrice for his little foot-page,
His name was English Will.

"Come thou hither, my little foot-page,
Come hither to my knee;
Though thou art young and tender of age,
I think thou art true to me.

"Come, tell me all that thou hast seen,
And look thou tell me true!
Since I from Smaylho'me tower have been,
What did thy lady do?"—

"My lady, each night, sought the lonely light,
That burns on the wild Watchfold;
For, from height to height, the beacons bright
Of the English foemen told.

"The bittern clamour'd from the moss,
The wind blew loud and shrill;
Yet the craggy pathway she did cross
To the eiry Beacon Hill.

"I watch'd her steps, and silent came
Where she sat her on a stone;—
No watchman stood by the dreary flame,
It burned all alone.

"The second night I kept her in sight,
Till to the fire she came,
And, by Mary's might! an Armed Knight
Stood by the lonely flame.

"And many a word that warlike lord
Did speak to my lady there;
But the rain fell fast, and loud blew the blast,
And I heard not what they were.

"The third night there the sky was fair,
And the mountain-blast was still,
As again I watch'd the secret pair,
On the lonesome Beacon Hill.

"And I heard her name the midnight hour,
And name this holy eve;
And say, 'Come this night to thy lady's bower;
Ask no bold baron's leave.

"'He lifts his spear with the bold Buccleuch;
His lady is all alone;
The door she'll undo, to her knight so true,
On the eve of good St. John.'—

"'I cannot come: I must not come;
I dare not come to thee;
On the eve of St. John I must wander alone:
In thy bower I may not be.'—

"'Now, out on thee, faint-hearted knight!
Thou shouldst not say me nay;
For the eve is sweet, and when lovers meet,
Is worth the whole summer's day.

"'And I'll chain the bloodhound, and the warder shall not sound,
And rushes shall be strew'd on the stair;
So, by the black rood-stone, and by holy St. John,
I conjure thee, my love, to be there!'

"'Though the bloodhound be mute, and the rush beneath my foot,
And the warder his bugle should not blow,
Yet there sleepeth a priest in a chamber to the east,
And my footstep he would know.'—

"'O fear not the priest, who sleepeth to the east!
For to Dryburgh the way he has ta'en;
And there to say mass, till three days do pass,
For the soul of a knight that is slayne.'

"He turn'd him around, and grimly he frown'd;
Then he laughed right scornfully—
'He who says the mass-rite for the soul of that knight,
May as well say mass for me:

"'At the lone midnight hour, when bad spirits have power,
In thy chamber will I be.'—
With that he was gone, and my lady left alone,
And no more did I see."

Then changed, I trow, was that bold Baron's brow,
From the dark to the blood-red high;
"Now, tell me the mien of the knight thou hast seen,
For, by Mary, he shall die!"—

"His arms shone full bright, in the beacon's red light:
His plume it was scarlet and blue;
On his shield was a hound, in a silver leash bound,
And his crest was a branch of the yew."—

"Thou liest, thou liest, thou little foot-page,
Loud dost thou lie to me!
For that knight is cold, and now laid in the mould,
All under the Eildon-tree."—

"Yet hear but my word, my noble lord!
For I heard her name his name;
And that lady bright, she called the knight
Sir Richard of Coldinghame."—

The bold Baron's brow then changed, I trow,
From high blood-red to pale—
"The grave is deep and dark—and the corpse is stiff and stark—
So I may not trust thy tale.

"Where fair Tweed flows round holy Melrose,
And Eildon slopes to the plain,
Full three nights ago, by some secret foe,
That gay gallant was slain.

"The varying light deceived thy sight,
And the wild winds drown'd the name;
For the Dryburgh bells ring, and the white monks do sing,
For Sir Richard of Coldinghame!"

He pass'd the court-gate, and he oped the tower-gate,
And he mounted the narrow stair,
To the bartizan-seat, where, with maids that on her wait,
He found his lady fair.

That lady sat in mournful mood;
Look'd over hill and vale;
Over Tweed's fair flood, and Mertoun's wood,
And all down Teviotdale.

"Now hail, now hail, thou lady bright!"—
"Now hail, thou Baron true!
What news, what news, from Ancram fight?
What news from the bold Buccleuch?"—

"The Ancram Moor is red with gore,
For many a Southron fell;
And Buccleuch has charged us, evermore,
To watch our beacons well."—

The lady blush'd red, but nothing she said:
Nor added the Baron a word:
Then she stepp'd down the stair to her chamber fair,
And so did her moody lord.

In sleep the lady mourn'd, and the Baron toss'd and turn'd,
And oft to himself he said,—
"The worms around him creep, and his bloody grave is deep . . .
It cannot give up the dead!"—

It was near the ringing of matin-bell,
The night was well-nigh done,
When a heavy sleep on that Baron fell,
On the eve of good St. John.

The lady look'd through the chamber fair,
By the light of a dying flame;
And she was aware of a knight stood there—
Sir Richard of Coldinghame!

"Alas! away, away!" she cried,
"For the holy Virgin's sake!"—
"Lady, I know who sleeps by thy side;
But, lady, he will not awake.

"By Eildon-tree, for long nights three,
In bloody grave have I lain;
The mass and the death-prayer are said for me,
But, lady, they are said in vain.

"By the Baron's brand, near Tweed's fair strand,
Most foully slain, I fell;
And my restless sprite on the beacon's height
For a space is doom'd to dwell.

"At our trysting-place, for a certain space,
I must wander to and fro;
But I had not had power to come to thy bower
Hadst thou not conjured me so."—

Love master'd fear—her brow she crossed;
"How, Richard, hast thou sped?
And art thou saved, or art thou lost?"—
The vision shook his head!

"Who spilleth life, shall forfeit life;
So bid thy lord believe:
That lawless love is guilt above,
This awful sign receive."

He laid his left palm on an oaken beam,
His right upon her hand;
The lady shrunk, and fainting sunk,
For it scorch'd like a fiery brand.

The sable score, of fingers four,
Remains on that board impress'd;
And for evermore that lady wore
A covering on her wrist.

There is a nun in Dryburgh bower,
Ne'er looks upon the sun;
There is a monk in Melrose tower
He speaketh word to none.

That nun, who ne'er beholds the day,
That monk, who speaks to none—
That nun was Smaylho'me's Lady gay,
That Monk the bold Baron.

## CADYOW CASTLE *

*Addressed to the Right Honourable Lady Anne Hamilton*

When princely Hamilton's abode
Ennobled Cadyow's Gothic towers,
The song went round, the goblet flow'd,
And revel sped the laughing hours.

Then, thrilling to the harp's gay sound,
So sweetly rung each vaulted wall,
And echoed light the dancer's bound,
As mirth and music cheer'd the hall.

But Cadyow's towers, in ruins laid,
And vaults, by ivy mantled o'er,
Thrill to the music of the shade,
Or echo Evan's hoarser roar.

Yet still, of Cadyow's faded fame,
You bid me tell a minstrel tale,
And tune my harp, of Border fame,
On the wild banks of Evandale.

For thou, from scenes of courtly pride,
From pleasure's lighter scenes, canst turn,
To draw oblivion's pall aside
And mark the long-forgotten urn.

Then, noble maid! at thy command,
Again the crumbled halls shall rise;
Lo! as on Evan's banks we stand,
The past returns—the present flies.

Where, with the rock's wood-cover'd side,
Were blended late the ruins green,
Rise turrets in fantastic pride,
And feudal banners flaunt between:

Where the rude torrent's brawling course
Was shagged with thorn and tangling sloe,
The ashlar buttress braves its force,
And ramparts frown in battled row.

'Tis night—the shades of keep and spire
Obscurely dance on Evan's stream;
And on the wave the warder's fire
Is chequering the moonlight beam.

Fades slow their light; the east is grey;
The weary warder leaves his tower:
Steeds snort; uncoupled stag-hounds bay,
And merry hunters quit the bower.

The drawbridge falls—they hurry out—
Clatters each plank and swinging chain,
As, dashing o'er, the jovial rout
Urge the shy steed, and slack the rein.

First of his troop, the Chief rode on;
His shouting merry-men throng behind;
The steed of princely Hamilton
Was fleeter than the mountain wind.

From the thick copse the roebucks bound,
The startled red-deer scuds the plain,
For the hoarse bugle's warrior sound
Has roused their mountain haunts again.

Through the huge oaks of Evandale,
Whose limbs a thousand years have worn,
What sullen roar comes down the gale,
And drowns the hunter's pealing horn?

Mightiest of all the beasts of chase,
That roam in woody Caledon,
Crashing the forest in his race,
The Mountain Bull comes thundering on.

Fierce, on the hunter's quiver'd band,
He rolls his eyes of swarthy glow,
Spurns with black hoof and horn the sand,
And tosses high his mane of snow.

Aim'd well, the Chieftain's lance has flown;
Struggling in blood the savage lies;
His roar is sunk in hollow groan—
Sound, merry huntsmen! sound the *pryse!*

'Tis noon—against the knotted oak
The hunters rest the idle spear;
Curls through the trees the slender smoke,
Where yeomen dight the woodland cheer.

Proudly the chieftain mark'd his clan,
On greenwood lap all careless thrown,
Yet missed his eye the boldest man
That bore the name of Hamilton.

"Why fills not Bothwellhaugh his place,
Still wont our weal and woe to share?
Why comes he not our sport to grace?
Why shares he not our hunter's fare?"—

Stern Claud replied, with darkening face,
(Grey Paisley's haughty lord was he),
"At merry feast, or buxom chase,
No more the warrior wilt thou see.

"Few suns have set since Woodhouselee
Saw Bothwellhaugh's bright goblets foam,
When to his hearths, in social glee,
The war-worn soldier turn'd him home.

"There, wan from her maternal throes,
His Margaret, beautiful and mild,
Sate in her bower, a pallid rose,
And peaceful nursed her new-born child.

"O change accursed! past are those days;
False Murray's ruthless spoilers came,
And, for the hearth's domestic blaze,
Ascends destruction's volumed flame.

"What sheeted phantom wanders wild,
Where mountain Eske through woodland flows,
Her arms enfold a shadowy child—
Oh! is it she, the pallid rose?

"The wilder'd traveller sees her glide,
And hears her feeble voice with awe—
'Revenge,' she cries, 'on Murray's pride!
And woe for injured Bothwellhaugh!'"

He ceased—and cries of rage and grief
Burst mingling from the kindred band,
And half arose the kindling Chief,
And half unsheathed his Arran brand.

But who, o'er bush, o'er stream and rock,
Rides headlong, with resistless speed,
Whose bloody poniard's frantic stroke
Drives to the leap his jaded steed?

Whose cheek is pale, whose eyeballs glare,
As one some vision'd sight that saw,
Whose hands are bloody, loose his hair?—
'Tis he! 'tis he! 'tis Bothwellhaugh.

From gory selle, and reeling steed,
Sprung the fierce horseman with a bound,
And, reeking with the recent deed,
He dash'd his carbine on the ground.

Sternly he spoke—"'Tis sweet to hear
In good greenwood the bugle blown,
But sweeter to Revenge's ear,
To drink a tyrant's dying groan.

"Your slaughter'd quarry proudly trode,
At dawning morn, o'er dale and down,
But prouder base-born Murray rode
Through old Linlithgow's crowded town.

"From the wild Border's humbled side,
In haughty triumph marched he,
While Knox relax'd his bigot pride,
And smiled, the traitorous pomp to see.

"But can stern Power, with all his vaunt,
Or Pomp, with all her courtly glare,
The settled heart of Vengeance daunt,
Or change the purpose of Despair?

"With hackbut bent, my secret stand,
Dark as the purposed deed, I chose,
And mark'd, where, mingling in his band,
Troop'd Scottish pikes and English bows.

"Dark Morton, girt with many a spear,
Murder's foul minion, led the van;
And clash'd their broadswords in the rear
The wild Macfarlane's plaided clan.

"Glencairn and stout Parkhead were nigh,
Obsequious at their Regent's rein,
And haggard Lindesay's iron eye,
That saw fair Mary weep in vain.

"'Mid pennon'd spears, a steely grove,
Proud Murray's plumage floated high;
Scarce could his trampling charger move,
So close the minions crowded nigh.

"From the raised vizor's shade, his eye,
Dark-rolling, glanced the ranks along,
And his steel truncheon, waved on high,
Seem'd marshalling the iron throng.

"But yet his sadden'd brow confess'd
A passing shade of doubt and awe;
Some fiend was whispering in his breast:
'Beware of injured Bothwellhaugh!'

"The death-shot parts—the charger springs—
Wild rises tumult's startling roar!
And Murray's plumy helmet rings—
—Rings on the ground to rise no more.

"What joy the raptured youth can feel,
To hear her love the loved one tell—
Or he, who broaches on his steel
The wolf, by whom his infant fell!

"But dearer to my injured eye
To see in dust proud Murray roll;
And mine was ten times trebled joy,
To hear him groan his felon soul.

"My Margaret's spectre glided near;
With pride her bleeding victim saw,
And shriek'd in his death-deafen'd ear,
'Remember injured Bothwellhaugh!'

"Then speed thee, noble Chatlerault!
Spread to the wind thy banner'd tree!
Each warrior bend his Clydesdale bow!—
Murray is fall'n, and Scotland free!"

Vaults every warrior to his steed;
Loud bugles join their wild acclaim—
"Murray is fall'n, and Scotland freed!
Couch, Arran! couch thy spear of flame!"

But, see! the minstrel vision fails—
The glimmering spears are seen no more;
The shouts of war die on the gales,
Or sink in Evan's lonely roar.

For the loud bugle, pealing high,
The blackbird whistles down the vale,
And sunk in ivied ruins lie
The banner'd towers of Evandale.

For Chiefs, intent on bloody deed,
And Vengeance shouting o'er the slain,
Lo! highborn Beauty rules the steed,
Or graceful guides the silken rein.

And long may peace and pleasure own
The maids who list the minstrel's tale;
Nor e'er a ruder guest be known
On the fair banks of Evandale!

# THOMAS THE RHYMER*

## In Three Parts

### PART FIRST—ANCIENT

True Thomas lay on Huntlie bank;
A ferlie he spied wi' his ee;
And there he saw a ladye bright,
Come riding down by the Eildon Tree.

Her shirt was o' the grass-green silk,
Her mantle o' the velvet fyne;
At ilka tett of her horse's mane,
Hung fifty siller bells and nine.

True Thomas, he pull'd aff his cap,
And louted low down to his knee,
"All hail, thou mighty Queen of Heaven!
For thy peer on earth I never did see."—

"O no, O no, Thomas," she said,
"That name does not belang to me;
I am but the Queen of fair Elfland,
That am hither come to visit thee.

"Harp and carp, Thomas," she said;
"Harp and carp along wi' me;
And if ye dare to kiss my lips,
Sure of your bodie I will be."—

"Betide me weal, betide me woe,
That weird shall never daunton me."—
Syne he has kiss'd her rosy lips,
All underneath the Eildon Tree.

"Now, ye maun go wi' me," she said;
"True Thomas, ye maun go wi' me;
And ye maun serve me seven years,
Thro' weal or woe as may chance to be."

She mounted on her milk-white steed;
She's ta'en true Thomas up behind:
And aye, whene'er her bridle rung,
The steed flew swifter than the wind.

O they rade on, and farther on;
The steed gaed swifter than the wind;
Until they reach'd a desert wide,
And living land was left behind.

"Light down, light down, now, true Thomas,
And lean your head upon my knee;
Abide and rest a little space,
And I will show you ferlies three.

"O see ye not yon narrow road,
So thick beset with thorns and briers?
That is the path of righteousness,
Though after it but few enquires.

"And see ye not that braid braid road,
That lies across that lily leven?
That is the path of wickedness,
Though some call it the road to heaven.

"And see not ye that bonny road,
That winds about the fernie brae?
That is the road to fair Elfland,
Where thou and I this night maun gae.

"But, Thomas, ye maun hold your tongue,
Whatever ye may hear or see;
For, if ye speak word in Elflyn land,
Ye'll ne'er get back to your ain countrie."

O they rade on, and farther on,
And they waded through rivers aboon the knee,
And they saw neither sun nor moon,
But they heard the roaring of the sea.

It was mirk mirk night, and there was nae stern light,
And they waded through red blude to the knee,
For a' the blude that's shed on earth
Rins through the springs o' that countrie.

Syne they came on to a garden green,
And she pu'd an apple frae a tree—
"Take this for thy wages, true Thomas;
It will give thee the tongue that can never lie."—

"My tongue is mine ain," true Thomas said;
"A gudely gift ye wad gie to me!
I neither dought to buy nor sell,
At fair or tryst where I may be.

"I dought neither speak to prince or peer,
Nor ask of grace from fair ladye."—
"Now hold thy peace!" the lady said,
"For as I say, so must it be."—

He has gotten a coat of the even cloth,
And a pair of shoes of velvet green;
And till seven years were gane and past,
True Thomas on earth was never seen.

## PART SECOND—ALTERED FROM ANCIENT PROPHECIES

When seven years were come and gane,
The sun blink'd fair on pool and stream;
And Thomas lay on Huntlie Bank,
Like one awaken'd from a dream.

He heard the trampling of a steed,
He saw the flash of armour flee,
And he beheld a gallant knight
Come riding down by the Eildon Tree.

He was a stalwart knight, and strong;
Of giant make he 'pear'd to be:
He stirr'd his horse, as he were wode,
Wi' gilded spurs, of faushion free.

Says—"Well met, well met, true Thomas!
Some uncouth ferlies show to me."—
Says—"Christ thee save, Corspatrick brave!
Thrice welcume, good Dunbar, to me!

"Light down, light down, Corspatrick brave!
And I will show thee curses three,
Shall gar fair Scotland greet and grane,
And change the green to the black livery.

"A storm shall roar this very hour,
From Ross's hills to Solway sea."—
"Ye lied, ye lied, ye warlock hoar,
For the sun shines sweet on fauld and lee."—

He put his hand on the Earlie's head;
He show'd him a rock beside the sea,
Where a king lay stiff beneath his steed,
And steel-dight nobles wiped their ee.

"The neist curse lights on Branxton hills:
By Flodden's high and heathery side,
Shall wave a banner red as bluid,
And chieftains throng wi' meikle pride.

"A Scottish King shall come full keen,
The ruddy lion beareth he;
A feather'd arrow sharp, I ween,
Shall make him wink and warre to see.

"When he is bloody, and all to bledde,
Thus to his men he still shall say—
'For God's sake, turn ye back again,
And give yon southern folk a fray!
Why should I lose, the right is mine?
My doom is not to die this day.'

"Yet turn ye to the eastern hand,
And woe and wonder ye sall see;
How forty thousand spearmen stand,
Where yon rank river meets the sea.

"There shall the lion lose the gylte,
And the libbards bear it clean away;
At Pinkyn Cleuch there shall be spilt
Much gentil bluid that day."—

"Enough, enough, of curse and ban;
Some blessings show thou now to me,
Or, by the faith o' my bodie," Corspatrick said,
"Ye shall rue the day ye e'er saw me!"—

"The first of blessings I shall thee show,
Is by a burn, that's call'd of bread;*
Where Saxon men shall tine the bow,
And find their arrows lack the head.

"Beside that brigg, out ower that burn,
Where the water bickereth bright and sheen,
Shall many a fallen courser spurn,
And knights shall die in battle keen.

"Beside a headless cross of stone,
The libbards there shall lose the gree:
The raven shall come, the erne shall go,
And drink the Saxon bluid sae free.
The cross of stone they shall not know,
So thick the corses there shall be."—

"But tell me, now," said brave Dunbar,
"True Thomas, tell now unto me,
What man shall rule the isle Britain,
Even from the north to the southern sea?"—

"A French Queen shall bear the son,
Shall rule all Britain to the sea;*
He of the Bruce's blood shall come,
As near as in the ninth degree.

"The waters worship shall his race;
Likewise the waves of the farthest sea;
For they shall ride over ocean wide,
With hempen bridles, and horse of tree."

## PART THIRD—MODERN

When seven years more were come and gone,
Was war through Scotland spread,
And Ruberslaw show'd high Dunyon
His beacon blazing red.

Then all by bonny Coldingknow
Pitch'd palliouns took their room,
And crested helms, and spears a-rowe,
Glanced gaily through the broom.

The Leader, rolling to the Tweed,
Resounds the ensenzie;
They roused the deer from Caddenhead,
To distant Torwoodlee.

The feast was spread in Ercildoune,
In Learmont's high and ancient hall:
And there were knights of great renown,
And ladies, laced in pall.

Nor lack'd they, while they sat at dine,
The music nor the tale,
Nor goblets of the blood-red wine,
Nor mantling quaighs of ale.

True Thomas rose, with harp in hand,
When as the feast was done:
(In minstrel strife, in Fairy Land,
The elfin harp he won).

Hush'd were the throng, both limb and tongue,
And harpers for envy pale;
And armed lords lean'd on their swords,
And hearken'd to the tale.

In numbers high, the witching tale
The prophet pour'd along;
No after bard might e'er avail
Those numbers to prolong.

Yet fragments of the lofty strain
Float down the tide of years,
As, buoyant on the stormy main,
A parted wreck appears.

He sung King Arthur's Table Round:
The Warrior of the Lake;
How courteous Gawaine met the wound,
And bled for ladies' sake.

But chief, in gentle Tristrem's praise,
The notes melodious swell;
Was none excell'd, in Arthur's days,
The knight of Lionelle.

For Marke, his cowardly uncle's right,
A venom'd wound he bore;
When fierce Morholde he slew in fight,
Upon the Irish shore.

No art the poison might withstand;
No medicine could be found,
Till lovely Isolde's lily hand
Had probed the rankling wound.

With gentle hand and soothing tongue
She bore the leech's part;
And, while she o'er his sick-bed hung,
He paid her with his heart.

O fatal was the gift, I ween!
For, doom'd in evil tide,
The maid must be rude Cornwall's queen,
His cowardly uncle's bride.

Their loves, their woes, the gifted bard
In fairy tissue wove;
Where lords, and knights, and ladies bright
In gay confusion strove.

The Garde Joyeuse, amid the tale,
High rear'd its glittering head,
And Avalon's enchanted vale
In all its wonders spread.

Brangwain was there, and Segramore,
And fiend-born Merlin's gramarye;
Of that famed wizard's mighty lore,
O who could sing but he?

Through many a maze the winning song
In changeful passion led,
Till bent at length the listening throng
O'er Tristrem's dying bed.

His ancient wounds their scars expand,
With agony his heart is wrung:
O where is Isolde's lilye hand,
And where her soothing tongue?

She comes! she comes!—like flash of flame
Can lovers' footsteps fly:
She comes! she comes!—she only came
To see her Tristrem die.

She saw him die; her latest sigh
Join'd in a kiss his parting breath,
The gentlest pair, that Britain bare,
United are in death.

There paused the harp: its lingering sound
Died slowly on the ear;
The silent guests still bent around,
For still they seem'd to hear.

Then woe broke forth in murmurs weak:
Nor ladies heaved alone the sigh;
But half ashamed the rugged cheek
Did many a gauntlet dry.

On Leader's stream, and Learmont's tower,
The mists of evening close;
In camp, in castle, or in bower,
Each warrior sought repose.

Lord Douglas, in his lofty tent,
Dreamed o'er the woeful tale;
When footsteps light, across the bent,
The warrior's ears assail.

He starts, he wakes;—"What, Richard, ho!
Arise, my page, arise!
What venturous wight, at dead of night,
Dare step where Douglas lies?"—

Then forth they rush'd: by Leader's tide
A selcouth sight they see—
A hart and hind pace side by side,
As white as snow on Fairnalie.*

Beneath the moon, with gesture proud,
They stately move and slow;
Nor scare they at the gathering crowd,
Who marvel as they go.

To Learmont's tower a message sped,
As fast as page might run;
And Thomas started from his bed,
And soon his clothes did on.

First he woxe pale, and then woxe red;
Never a word he spake but three;—
"My sand is run; my thread is spun;
This sign regardeth me."

The elfin harp his neck around,
In minstrel guise, he hung;
And on the wind, in doleful sound,
Its dying accents rung.

Then forth he went; yet turned him oft
To view his ancient hall:
On the grey tower, in lustre soft,
The autumn moonbeams fall;

And Leader's waves, like silver sheen,
Danced shimmering in the ray;
In deepening mass, at distance seen,
Broad Soltra's mountains lay.

"Farewell, my father's ancient tower!
A long farewell," said he:
"The scene of pleasure, pomp, or power,
Thou never more shalt be.

"To Learmont's name no foot of earth
Shall here again belong,
And, on thy hospitable hearth,
The hare shall leave her young.

"Adieu! adieu!" again he cried,
All as he turn'd him roun'—
"Farewell to Leader's silver tide!
Farewell to Ercildoune!"

The hart and hind approach'd the place,
As lingering yet he stood;
And there, before Lord Douglas' face,
With them he cross'd the flood.

Lord Douglas leap'd on his berry-brown steed,
And spurr'd him the Leader o'er;
But, though he rode with lightning speed,
He never saw them more.

Some said to hill, and some to glen,
Their wondrous course had been;
But ne'er in haunts of living men
Again was Thomas seen.

## THE REIVER'S WEDDING

O, WILL ye hear a mirthful bourd?
Or will ye hear of courtesie?
Or will hear how a gallant lord
Was wedded to a gay ladye?

"Ca' out the kye," quo' the village herd,
As he stood on the knowe,
"Ca' this ane's nine and that ane's ten,
And bauld Lord William's cow."

"Ah! by my sooth," quoth William then,
"And stands it that way now,
When knave and churl have nine and ten,
That the lord hath but his cow?

"I swear by the light of the Michaelmas moon
And the might of Mary high,
And by the edge of my braidsword brown
They shall soon say Harden's kye."

He took a bugle frae his side,
With names carved o'er and o'er—
Full many a chief of meikle pride
That Border bugle bore—

He blew a note baith sharp and hie,
Till rock and water rang around—
Threescore of moss-troopers and three
Have mounted at that bugle sound.

The Michaelmas moon had entered then,
And ere she wan the full,
Ye might see by her light in Harden glen
A bow o' kye and a bassen'd bull.

And loud and loud in Harden tower
The quaigh gaed round wi' meikle glee;
For the English beef was brought in bower
And the English ale flow'd merrilie.

And mony a guest from Teviotside
And Yarrow's Braes was there;
Was never a lord in Scotland wide
That made more dainty fare.

They ate, they laugh'd, they sang and quaff'd,
Till nought on board was seen,
When knight and squire were boun to dine,
But a spur of silver sheen.

Lord William has ta'en his berry-brown steed—
A sore shent man was he;
"Wait ye, my guests, a little speed—
Weel feasted ye shall be."

He rode him down by Falsehope * burn,
His cousin dear to see,
With him to take a riding turn—
Wat-draw-the-sword was he.

And when he came to Falsehope glen,
Beneath the trysting-tree,
On the smooth green was carved plain,
"To Lochwood bound are we."

"O, if they be gane to dark Lochwood
To drive the Warden's gear,
Betwixt our names, I ween, there's feud;
I'll go and have my share:

"For little reck I for Johnstone's feud,
The Warden though he be."
So Lord William is away to dark Lochwood,
With riders barely three.

The Warden's daughters in Lochwood sate,
Were all both fair and gay,
All save the Lady Margaret,
And she was wan and wae.

The sister, Jean, had a full fair skin,
And Grace was bauld and braw;
But the leal-fast heart her breast within
It weel was worth them a'.

Her father's pranked her sisters twa
With meikle joy and pride;
But Margaret maun seek Dundrennan's wa'—
She ne'er can be a bride.

On spear and casque by gallants gent
Her sisters' scarfs were borne,
But never at tilt or tournament
Were Margaret's colours worn.

Her sisters rode to Thirlstane bower,
But she was left at hame
To wander round the gloomy tower,
And sigh young Harden's name.

"Of all the knights, the knight most fair,
From Yarrow to the Tyne,"
Soft sigh'd the maid, "is Harden's heir,
But ne'er can he be mine;

"Of all the maids the foulest maid
From Teviot to the Dee,
Ah!" sighing sad, that lady said,
"Can ne'er young Harden's be."—

She lookèd up the briery glen,
And up the mossy brae,
And she saw a score of her father's men
Yclad in the Johnstone grey.

O, fast and fast they downwards sped
The moss and briers among,
And in the midst the troopers led
A shackled knight along.

. . . . .

## GLENFINLAS:*

## OR, LORD RONALD'S CORONACH

"O HONE a rie'! O hone a rie'!
The pride of Albin's line is o'er;
And fall'n Glenartney's stateliest tree;
We ne'er shall see Lord Ronald more!"—

O, sprung from great Macgillianore,
The chief that never fear'd a foe,
How matchless was thy broad claymore,
How deadly thine unerring bow!

Well can the Saxon widows tell,
How, on the Teith's resounding shore,
The boldest Lowland warriors fell,
As down from Lenny's pass you bore.

But o'er his hills, in festal day,
How blazed Lord Ronald's beltanetree,
While youths and maids the light strathspey
So nimbly danced with Highland glee!

Cheer'd by the strength of Ronald's shell,
E'en age forgot his tresses hoar;
But now the loud lament we swell,
O ne'er to see Lord Ronald more.

From distant isles a chieftain came,
The joys of Ronald's halls to find,
And chase with him the dark-brown game,
That bounds o'er Albin's hills of wind.

'Twas Moy; whom in Columba's isle
The seer's prophetic spirit found,
As, with a minstrel's fire the while,
He waked his harp's harmonious sound.

Full many a spell to him was known,
Which wandering spirits shrink to hear;
And many a lay of potent tone,
Was never meant for mortal ear.

For there, 'tis said, in mystic mood,
High converse with the dead they hold,
And oft espy the fated shroud,
That shall the future corpse enfold.

O so it fell, that on a day,
To rouse the red-deer from their den,
The Chiefs have ta'en their distant way,
And scour'd the deep Glenfinlas glen.

No vassals wait their sports to aid,
To watch their safety, deck their board;
Their simple dress, the Highland plaid,
Their trusty guard, the Highland sword.

Three summer days, through brake and dell,
Their whistling shafts successful flew;
And still, when dewy evening fell,
The quarry to their hut they drew.

In grey Glenfinlas' deepest nook
The solitary cabin stood,
Fast by Moneira's sullen brook,
Which murmurs through that lonely wood.

Soft fell the night, the sky was calm,
When three successive days had flown;
And summer mist in dewy balm
Steep'd heathy bank and mossy stone.

The moon, half-hid in silvery flakes,
Afar her dubious radiance shed,
Quivering on Katrine's distant lakes,
And resting on Benledi's head.

Now in their hut, in social guise,
Their silvan fare the Chiefs enjoy;
And pleasure laughs in Ronald's eyes,
As many a pledge he quaffs to Moy.

"What lack we here to crown our bliss,
While thus the pulse of joy beats high?
What, but fair woman's yielding kiss,
Her panting breath and melting eye?

"To chase the deer of yonder shades,
This morning left their father's pile
The fairest of our mountain maids,
The daughters of the proud Glengyle.

"Long have I sought sweet Mary's heart,
And dropp'd the tear, and heaved the sigh:
But vain the lover's wily art,
Beneath a sister's watchful eye.

"But thou mayst teach that guardian fair,
While far with Mary I am flown,
Of other hearts to cease her care,
And find it hard to guard her own.

"Touch but thy harp, thou soon shalt see
The lovely Flora of Glengyle,
Unmindful of her charge and me,
Hang on thy notes, 'twixt tear and smile.

"Or, if she choose a melting tale,
All underneath the greenwood bough,
Will good St. Oran's rule prevail,
Stern huntsman of the rigid brow!"—

"Since Enrick's fight, since Morna's death,
No more on me shall rapture rise,
Responsive to the panting breath,
Or yielding kiss, or melting eyes.

"E'en then, when o'er the heath of woe,
Where sunk my hopes of love and fame,
I bade my harp's wild wailings flow,
On me the Seer's sad spirit came.

"The last dread curse of angry heaven,
With ghastly sights and sounds of woe,
To dash each glimpse of joy was given—
The gift, the future ill to know.

"The bark thou saw'st, yon summer morn,
So gaily part from Oban's bay,
My eye beheld her dash'd and torn,
Far on the rocky Colonsay.

"Thy Fergus too—thy sister's son,
Thou saw'st, with pride, the gallant's power,
As marching 'gainst the Lord of Downe,
He left the skirts of huge Benmore.

"Thou only saw'st their tartans wave,
As down Benvoirlich's side they wound,
Heard'st but the pibroch, answering brave
To many a target clanking round.

"I heard the groans, I mark'd the tears,
I saw the wound his bosom bore,
When on the serried Saxon spears
He pour'd his clan's resistless roar.

"And thou, who bidst me think of bliss,
And bidst my heart awake to glee,
And court, like thee, the wanton kiss—
That heart, O Ronald, bleeds for thee!

"I see the death-damps chill thy brow;
I hear thy Warning Spirit cry;
The corpse-lights dance — they're gone, and now . . .
No more is given to gifted eye!"——

"Alone enjoy thy dreary dreams,
Sad prophet of the evil hour!
Say, should we scorn joy's transient beams,
Because to-morrow's storm may lour?

"Or false, or sooth, thy words of woe,
Clangillian's Chieftain ne'er shall fear;
His blood shall bound at rapture's glow,
Though doom'd to stain the Saxon spear.

"E'en now, to meet me in yon dell,
My Mary's buskins brush the dew."
He spoke, nor bade the Chief farewell,
But called his dogs, and gay withdrew.

Within an hour return'd each hound;
In rush'd the rousers of the deer;
They howl'd in melancholy sound,
Then closely couch'd beside the Seer.

No Ronald yet; though midnight came,
And sad were Moy's prophetic dreams,
As, bending o'er the dying flame,
He fed the watch-fire's quivering gleams.

Sudden the hounds erect their ears,
And sudden cease their moaning howl;
Close press'd to Moy, they mark their fears
By shivering limbs and stifled growl.

Untouch'd, the harp began to ring,
As softly, slowly, oped the door;
And shook responsive every string,
As light a footstep press'd the floor.

And by the watch-fire's glimmering light,
Close by the minstrel's side was seen
An huntress maid, in beauty bright,
All dropping wet her robes of green.

All dropping wet her garments seem;
Chill'd was her cheek, her bosom bare,
As, bending o'er the dying gleam,
She wrung the moisture from her hair.

With maiden blush, she softly said,
"O gentle huntsman, hast thou seen,
In deep Glenfinlas' moonlight glade,
A lovely maid in vest of green:

"With her a Chief in Highland pride:
His shoulders bear the hunter's bow,
The mountain dirk adorns his side,
Far on the wind his tartans flow?"—

"And who art thou? and who are they?"
All ghastly gazing, Moy replied:
"And why, beneath the moon's pale ray,
Dare ye thus roam Glenfinlas' side?"—

"Where wild Loch Katrine pours her tide,
Blue, dark, and deep, round many an isle,
Our father's towers o'erhang her side,
The castle of the bold Glengyle.

"To chase the dun Glenfinlas deer,
Our woodland course this morn we bore,
And haply met, while wandering here,
The son of great Macgillianore.

"O aid me, then, to seek the pair,
Whom, loitering in the woods, I lost;
Alone, I dare not venture there,
Where walks, they say, the shrieking ghost."—

"Yes, many a shrieking ghost walks there;
Then, first, my own sad vow to keep,
Here will I pour my midnight prayer,
Which still must rise when mortals sleep."—

"O first, for pity's gentle sake,
Guide a lone wanderer on her way!
For I must cross the haunted brake,
And reach my father's towers ere day."

"First, three times tell each Ave-bead,
And thrice a Pater-noster say;
Then kiss with me the holy rede;
So shall we safely wend our way."—

"O shame to knighthood, strange and foul!
Go, doff the bonnet from thy brow,
And shroud thee in the monkish cowl,
Which best befits thy sullen vow.

"Not so, by high Dunlathmon's fire,
Thy heart was froze to love and joy,
When gaily rung thy raptured lyre
To wanton Morna's melting eye."

Wild stared the minstrel's eyes of flame,
And high his sable locks arose,
And quick his colour went and came,
As fear and rage alternate rose.

"And thou! when by the blazing oak
I lay, to her and love resign'd,
Say, rode ye on the eddying smoke,
Or sail'd ye on the midnight wind?

"Not thine a race of mortal blood,
Nor old Glengyle's pretended line;
Thy dame, the Lady of the Flood—
Thy sire, the Monarch of the Mine."

He mutter'd thrice St. Oran's rhyme,
And thrice St. Fillan's powerful prayer;
Then turn'd him to the eastern clime,
And sternly shook his coal-black hair.

And, bending o'er his harp, he flung
His wildest witch-notes on the wind;
And loud, and high, and strange, they rung,
As many a magic change they find.

Tall wax'd the Spirit's altering form,
Till to the roof her stature grew;
Then, mingling with the rising storm,
With one wild yell away she flew.

Rain beats, hail rattles, whirlwinds tear:
The slender hut in fragments flew;
But not a lock of Moy's loose hair
Was waved by wind, or wet by dew.

Wild mingling with the howling gale,
Loud bursts of ghastly laughter rise;
High o'er the minstrel's head they sail,
And die amid the northern skies.

The voice of thunder shook the wood,
As ceased the more than mortal yell;
And, spattering foul, a shower of blood
Upon the hissing firebrands fell.

Next dropp'd from high a mangled arm ;
  The fingers strain'd an half-drawn blade :
And last, the life-blood streaming warm,
  Torn from the trunk, a gasping head.

Oft o'er that head, in battling field,
  Stream'd the proud crest of high Benmore ;
That arm the broad claymore could wield,
  Which dyed the Teith with Saxon gore.

Woe to Moneira's sullen rills !
  Woe to Glenfinlas' dreary glen !
There never son of Albion's hills
  Shall draw the hunter's shaft agen.

E'en the tired pilgrim's burning feet
  At noon shall shun that sheltering den,
Lest, journeying in their rage, he meet
  The wayward Ladies of the Glen.

And we—behind the Chieftain's shield,
  No more shall we in safety dwell ;
None leads the people to the field—
  And we the loud lament must swell.

O hone a rie' ! O hone a rie' !
  The pride of Albin's line is o'er !
And fall'n Glenartney's stateliest tree ;
  We ne'er shall see Lord Ronald more !

## ELSPETH'S BALLAD

From *The Antiquary*

The herring loves the merry moon-light,
  The mackerel loves the wind,
But the oyster loves the dredging sang,
  For they come of a gentle kind.

Now haud your tongue, baith wife and carle,
  And listen great and sma',
And I will sing of Glenallan's Earl
  That fought on the red Harlaw.*

The Cronach's cried on Bennachie,
And doun the Don and a',
And hieland and lawland may mournfu' be,
For the sair field o' Harlaw.

They saddled a hundred milk-white steeds,
They hae bridled a hundred black,
With a chaferon of steel on each horse's head,
And a good knight upon his back.

They hadna ridden a mile, a mile,
A mile but barely ten,
When Donald came branking down the brae
Wi' twenty thousand men.

Their tartans they were waving wide,
Their glaives were glancing clear,
The pibrochs rung frae side to side,
Would deafen ye to hear.

The great Earl in his stirrups stood,
That Highland host to see:
"Now here a knight that's stout and good
May prove a jeopardie:

"What wouldst thou do, my squire so gay,
That rides beside my rein,—
Were ye Glenallan's Earl the day,
And I were Roland Cheyne?

"To turn the rein were sin and shame,
To fight were wondrous peril,—
What would you do now, Roland Cheyne,
Were ye Glenallan's Earl?"—

"Were I Glenallan's Earl this tide,
And ye were Roland Cheyne,
The spur should be in my horse's side,
And the bridle upon his mane.

"If they hae twenty thousand blades,
And we twice ten times ten,
Yet they hae but their tartan plaids,
And we are mail-clad men.

"My horse shall ride through ranks sae rude,
As through the moorland fern,—
Then ne'er let the gentle Norman blude
Grow cauld for Highland kerne."

. . . . . .

He turn'd him right and round again,
Said, Scorn na at my mither;
Light loves I may get mony a ane,
But minnie ne'er anither.

# THE LAY

OF

# THE LAST MINSTREL

A POEM

IN SIX CANTOS

## INTRODUCTION

THE way was long, the wind was cold,
The Minstrel was infirm and old;
His wither'd cheek, and tresses grey,
Seem'd to have known a better day;
The harp, his sole remaining joy,
Was carried by an orphan boy.
The last of all the Bards was he,
Who sung of Border chivalry;
For, welladay! their date was fled,
His tuneful brethren all were dead;
And he, neglected and oppress'd,
Wish'd to be with them, and at rest.
No more on prancing palfrey borne,
He caroll'd light as lark at morn;
No longer courted and caress'd,
High placed in hall, a welcome guest,

He pour'd, to lord and lady gay,
The unpremeditated lay:
Old times were changed, old manners gone,
A stranger fill'd the Stuarts' throne;
The bigots of the iron time[1]
Had call'd his harmless art a crime.
A wandering Harper, scorn'd and poor,
He begg'd his bread from door to door,
And tuned, to please a peasant's ear,
The harp, a king had loved to hear.

He pass'd where Newark's stately tower
Looks out from Yarrow's birchen bower:
The Minstrel gazed with wishful eye—
No humbler resting-place was nigh.
With hesitating step at last,
The embattled portal arch he pass'd,
Whose ponderous grate and massy bar
Had oft roll'd back the tide of war,
But never closed the iron door
Against the desolate and poor.
The Duchess[2] mark'd his weary pace,
His timid mien, and reverend face,
And bade her page the menials tell,
That they should tend the old man well;
For she had known adversity,
Though born in such a high degree;
In pride of power, in beauty's bloom,
Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody tomb.

When kindness had his wants supplied,
And the old man was gratified,
Began to rise his minstrel pride:
And he began to talk anon,
Of good Earl Francis, dead and gone,
And of Earl Walter, rest him, God!
A braver ne'er to battle rode;

[1] Under the Commonwealth an ordinance was passed against itinerant fiddlers or minstrels.

[2] Anne, Duchess of Buccleuch and Monmouth, representative of the ancient Lords of Buccleuch, and widow of the unfortunate James, Duke of Monmouth, who was beheaded in 1685.

And how full many a tale he knew,
Of the old warriors of Buccleuch:
And, would the noble Duchess deign
To listen to an old man's strain,
Though stiff his hand, his voice though weak,
He thought even yet, the sooth to speak,
That, if she loved the harp to hear,
He could make music to her ear.

The humble boon was soon obtain'd;
The Aged Minstrel audience gain'd.
But, when he reach'd the room of state,
Where she, with all her ladies, sate,
Perchance he wish'd his boon denied:
For, when to tune his harp he tried,
His trembling hand had lost the ease,
Which marks security to please;
And scenes, long past, of joy and pain,
Came wildering o'er his aged brain—
He tried to tune his harp in vain!
The pitying Duchess praised its chime,
And gave him heart, and gave him time,
Till every string's according glee
Was blended into harmony.
And then, he said, he would full fain
He could recall an ancient strain,
He never thought to sing again.
It was not framed for village churls,
But for high dames and mighty earls;
He had play'd it to King Charles the Good,
When he kept court in Holyrood;[1]
And much he wish'd, yet fear'd, to try
The long-forgotten melody.
Amid the strings his fingers stray'd,
And an uncertain warbling made,
And oft he shook his hoary head.
But when he caught the measure wild,
The old man raised his face, and smiled;
And lighten'd up his faded eye,
With all a poet's ecstasy!

1 Charles I. was twice at Holyrood, in 1633 and again in 1641.

In varying cadence, soft or strong,
He swept the sounding chords along:
The present scene, the future lot,
His toils, his wants, were all forgot:
Cold diffidence, and age's frost,
In the full tide of song were lost;
Each blank, in faithless memory void,
The poet's glowing thought supplied;
And, while his harp responsive rung,
'Twas thus the LATEST MINSTREL sung.

## CANTO FIRST

I

THE feast was over in Branksome tower,[1]
And the Ladye had gone to her secret bower;
Her bower that was guarded by word and by spell,
Deadly to hear, and deadly to tell—
Jesu Maria, shield us well!
No living wight, save the Ladye alone,
Had dared to cross the threshold stone.

II

The tables were drawn, it was idlesse all;
Knight, and page, and household squire,
Loiter'd through the lofty hall,
Or crowded round the ample fire:
The stag-hounds, weary with the chase,
Lay stretch'd upon the rushy floor,
And urged, in dreams, the forest race,
From Teviot-stone to Eskdale-moor.

III

Nine-and-twenty knights of fame
Hung their shields in Branksome-Hall,

[1] Branksome or Branxholm Hall became the seat of Sir William Scott of Buccleuch, the head of the clan Scott, in the reign of James I. Sir William obtained it of his own motion in exchange for an estate in a county less exposed to English freebooters. Its exposed position seemed no drawback to him: "English kine," he said, "were as good as Scottish."

Nine-and-twenty squires of name [1]
Brought them their steeds to bower from stall;
Nine-and-twenty yeomen tall
Waited, duteous, on them all:
They were all knights of mettle true,
Kinsmen to the bold Buccleuch.

IV

Ten of them were sheathed in steel,
With belted sword, and spur on heel:
They quitted not their harness bright,
Neither by day, nor yet by night:
They lay down to rest,
With corslet laced,
Pillow'd on buckler cold and hard;
They carved at the meal
With gloves of steel,
And they drank the red wine through the helmet barr'd.

V

Ten squires, ten yeomen, mail-clad men,
Waited the beck of the warders ten;
Thirty steeds, both fleet and wight,
Stood saddled in stable day and night,
Barbed with frontlet of steel, I trow,
And with Jedwood-axe at saddle-bow;
A hundred more fed free in stall:—
Such was the custom of Branksome-Hall.

VI

Why do these steeds stand ready dight?
Why watch these warriors, arm'd, by night?—
They watch, to hear the blood-hound baying:
They watch, to hear the war-horn braying;
To see St. George's red cross streaming,
To see the midnight beacon gleaming:

[1] The barons of Buccleuch, partly for show and partly for use, retained in their household a number of gentlemen of their own name, who held lands for their service. The splendour of the establishment is romantically exaggerated by the bard.

They watch, against Southern force and guile,
Lest Scroop, or Howard, or Percy's powers,
Threaten Branksome's * lordly towers,
From Warkworth, or Naworth, or merry Carlisle.[1]

VII

Such is the custom of Branksome-Hall.—
Many a valiant knight is here;
But he, the chieftain of them all,
His sword hangs rusting on the wall,
Beside his broken spear.
Bards long shall tell,
How Lord Walter fell![2]
When startled burghers fled, afar,
The furies of the Border war;
When the streets of high Dunedin
Saw lances gleam, and falchions redden,
And heard the slogan's[3] deadly yell—
Then the Chief of Branksome fell.

VIII

Can piety the discord heal,
Or stanch the death-feud's enmity?
Can Christian lore, can patriot zeal,
Can love of blessed charity?
No! vainly to each holy shrine,
In mutual pilgrimage, they drew;[4]
Implored, in vain, the grace divine
For chiefs, their own red falchions slew:
While Cessford owns the rule of Carr,
While Ettrick boasts the line of Scott,
The slaughter'd chiefs, the mortal jar,
The havoc of the feudal war,
Shall never, never be forgot!

1 The three principal Border fortresses on the English side, from which sudden raids were to be feared.

2 The murder of Sir Walter Scott in the streets of Edinburgh in 1552 was an incident in a long-standing feud between the Scotts and the Kerrs.

3 The war-cry or gathering word of a Border clan.

4 The heads of the two clans and their partisans were formally reconciled in 1529, and they bound themselves to perform the four principal pilgrimages of Scotland and pray for the souls of their respective enemies who had fallen in the course of the feud. But in spite of this and other expedients the feud continued till the end of the century.

IX

In sorrow o'er Lord Walter's bier
The warlike foresters had bent;
And many a flower, and many a tear,
Old Teviot's maids and matrons lent:
But o'er her warrior's bloody bier
The Ladye dropp'd nor flower nor tear!
Vengeance, deep-brooding o'er the slain,
Had lock'd the source of softer woe;
And burning pride, and high disdain,
Forbade the rising tear to flow;
Until, amid his sorrowing clan,
Her son lisp'd from the nurse's knee—
"And if I live to be a man,
My father's death revenged shall be!"
Then fast the mother's tears did seek
To dew the infant's kindling cheek.

X

All loose her negligent attire,
All loose her golden hair,
Hung Margaret o'er her slaughter'd sire,
And wept in wild despair.
But not alone the bitter tear
Had filial grief supplied;
For hopeless love, and anxious fear,
Had lent their mingled tide:
Nor in her mother's alter'd eye
Dared she to look for sympathy.
Her lover, 'gainst her father's clan,
With Carr in arms had stood,
When Mathouse-burn to Melrose ran,
All purple with their blood;
And well she knew, her mother dread,
Before Lord Cranstoun she should wed,
Would see her on her dying bed.

XI

Of noble race the Ladye came,
Her father was a clerk of fame,
Of Bethune's line of Picardie:
He learn'd the art that none may name,

In Padua, far beyond the sea.[1]
Men said, he changed his mortal frame
By feat of magic mystery;
For when, in studious mood, he paced
St. Andrew's cloister'd hall,
His form no darkening shadow traced
Upon the sunny wall!

XII

And of his skill, as bards avow,
He taught that Ladye fair,
Till to her bidding she could bow
The viewless forms of air.
And now she sits in secret bower,
In old Lord David's western tower,
And listens to a heavy sound,
That moans the mossy turrets round.
Is it the roar of Teviot's tide,
That chafes against the scaur's red side?
Is it the wind that swings the oaks?
Is it the echo from the rocks?
What may it be, the heavy sound,
That moans old Branksome's turrets round?

XIII

At the sullen, moaning sound,
The ban-dogs bay and howl;
And, from the turrets round,
Loud whoops the startled owl.
In the hall, both squire and knight
Swore that a storm was near,
And looked forth to view the night;
But the night was still and clear!

XIV

From the sound of Teviot's tide,
Chafing with the mountain's side,
From the groan of the wind-swung oak,
From the sullen echo of the rock,

[1] Padua was long supposed, among the Scottish peasantry, to be the principal school of necromancy.

From the voice of the coming storm,
The Ladye knew it well!
It was the Spirit of the Flood that spoke,
And he call'd on the Spirit of the Fell.

XV

RIVER SPIRIT

"Sleep'st thou, brother?"—

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT

—"Brother, nay—
On my hills the moonbeams play.
From Craik-cross to Skelfhill-pen,
By every rill, in every glen,
Merry elves their morris pacing,
To aërial minstrelsy,
Emerald rings on brown heath tracing,
Trip it deft and merrily.
Up, and mark their nimble feet!
Up, and list their music sweet!"

XVI

RIVER SPIRIT

"Tears of an imprison'd maiden
Mix with my polluted stream;
Margaret of Branksome, sorrow-laden,
Mourns beneath the moon's pale beam.
Tell me, thou, who view'st the stars,
When shall cease these feudal jars?
What shall be the maiden's fate?
Who shall be the maiden's mate?"

XVII

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT

"Arthur's slow wain his course doth roll,
In utter darkness, round the pole;
The Northern Bear lowers black and grim;
Orion's studded belt is dim;
Twinkling faint, and distant far,
Shimmers through mist each planet star;

Ill may I read their high decree!
But no kind influence deign they shower
On Teviot's tide, and Branksome's tower,
Till pride be quell'd, and love be free."

XVIII

The unearthly voices ceast,
And the heavy sound was still;
It died on the river's breast,
It died on the side of the hill.
But round Lord David's tower
The sound still floated near;
For it rung in the Ladye's bower,
And it rung in the Ladye's ear.
She raised her stately head,
And her heart throbb'd high with pride:—
"Your mountains shall bend,
And your streams ascend,
Ere Margaret be our foeman's bride!"

XIX

The Ladye sought the lofty hall,
Where many a bold retainer lay,
And, with jocund din, among them all,
Her son pursued his infant play.
A fancied moss-trooper, the boy
The truncheon of a spear bestrode,
And round the hall, right merrily,
In mimic foray rode.
Even bearded knights, in arms grown old,
Share in his frolic gambols bore,
Albeit their hearts, of rugged mould,
Were stubborn as the steel they wore.
For the grey warriors prophesied,
How the brave boy, in future war,
Should tame the Unicorn's pride,
Exalt the Crescent and the Star.[1]

XX

The Ladye forgot her purpose high,
One moment, and no more;

1 The reference is to the arms of the two hostile families: unicorns occur in the arms of the Kerrs, crescents and a star in the arms of the Scotts.

One moment gazed with a mother's eye,
As she paused at the arched door:
Then, from amid the armed train,
She call'd to her William of Deloraine.*

XXI

A stark moss-trooping Scott was he,
As e'er couch'd Border lance by knee:
Through Solway sands, through Tarras moss,
Blindfold, he knew the paths to cross;
By wily turns, by desperate bounds,
Had baffled Percy's best blood-hounds;
In Eske, or Liddel, fords were none,
But he would ride them, one by one;
Alike to him was time or tide,
December's snow, or July's pride;
Alike to him was tide or time,
Moonless midnight, or matin prime:
Steady of heart, and stout of hand,
As ever drove prey from Cumberland;
Five times outlawed had he been,
By England's King, and Scotland's Queen.

XXII

"Sir William of Deloraine, good at need,
Mount thee on the wightest steed;
Spare not to spur, nor stint to ride,
Until thou come to fair Tweedside;
And in Melrose's holy pile
Seek thou the Monk of St. Mary's aisle.
Greet the Father well from me;
Say that the fated hour is come,
And to-night he shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb:
For this will be St. Michael's night,
And, though stars be dim, the moon is bright;
And the Cross, of bloody red,
Will point to the grave of the mighty dead.

XXIII

"What he gives thee, see thou keep;
Stay not thou for food or sleep:

Be it scroll, or be it book,
Into it, Knight, thou must not look;
If thou readest, thou art lorn!
Better hadst thou ne'er been born."—

XXIV

"O swiftly can speed my dapple-grey steed,
Which drinks of the Teviot clear;
Ere break of day," the Warrior 'gan say,
"Again will I be here:
And safer by none may thy errand be done,
Than, noble dame, by me;
Letter nor line know I never a one,
Wer't my neck-verse at Hairibee."[1]

XXV

Soon in his saddle sate he fast,
And soon the steep descent he past,
Soon cross'd the sounding barbican,[2]
And soon the Teviot side he won.
Eastward the wooded path he rode,
Green hazels o'er his basnet nod;
He pass'd the Peel[3] of Goldiland,*
And cross'd old Borthwick's roaring strand;
Dimly he viewed the Moat-hill's mound,*
Where Druid shades still flitted round:
In Hawick twinkled many a light;
Behind him soon they set in night;
And soon he spurr'd his courser keen
Beneath the tower of Hazeldean.

XXVI

The clattering hoofs the watchman mark;—
"Stand, ho! thou courier of the dark."—
"For Branksome, ho!" the knight rejoin'd,
And left the friendly tower behind.
He turn'd him now from Teviotside,
And, guided by the tinkling rill,

[1] The place of execution at Carlisle. Deloraine could not claim "benefit of clergy."

[2] *Barbican*, the defence of the outer gate of a feudal castle.

[3] *Peel*, a Border tower.

Northward the dark ascent did ride,
And gained the moor at Horsliehill;
Broad on the left before him lay,
For many a mile, the Roman way.

XXVII

A moment now he slack'd his speed,
A moment breathed his panting steed;
Drew saddle-girth and corslet-band,
And loosen'd in the sheath his brand.
On Minto-crags the moonbeams glint,
Where Barnhill * hew'd his bed of flint;
Who flung his outlaw'd limbs to rest,
Where falcons hang their giddy nest,
Mid cliffs, from whence his eagle eye
For many a league his prey could spy;
Cliffs, doubling, on their echoes borne,
The terrors of the robber's horn;
Cliffs, which, for many a later year,
The warbling Doric reed shall hear,
When some sad swain shall teach the grove,
Ambition is no cure for love!

XXVIII

Unchallenged, thence pass'd Deloraine,
To ancient Riddel's * fair domain,
Where Aill, from mountains freed,
Down from the lakes did raving come;
Each wave was crested with tawny foam,
Like the mane of a chestnut steed.
In vain! no torrent, deep or broad,
Might bar the bold moss-trooper's road.

XXIX

At the first plunge the horse sunk low,
And the water broke o'er the saddlebow;
Above the foaming tide, I ween,
Scarce half the charger's neck was seen;
For he was barded [1] from counter to tail,
And the rider was armed complete in mail;

[1] *Barded*, or barbed,—applied to a horse accoutred with defensive armour.

Never heavier man and horse
Stemm'd a midnight torrent's force.
The warrior's very plume, I say,
Was daggled by the dashing spray;
Yet, through good heart, and Our Ladye's grace,
At length he gain'd the landing place.

XXX

Now Bowden Moor the march-man won,
And sternly shook his plumed head,
As glanced his eye o'er Halidon;[1]
For on his soul the slaughter red
Of that unhallow'd morn arose,
When first the Scott and Carr were foes;
When royal James beheld the fray,
Prize to the victor of the day;
When Home and Douglas, in the van,
Bore down Buccleuch's retiring clan,
Till gallant Cessford's heart-blood dear
Reek'd on dark Elliot's Border spear.

XXXI

In bitter mood he spurred fast,
And soon the hated heath was past;
And far beneath, in lustre wan,
Old Melros' rose, and fair Tweed ran:
Like some tall rock with lichens grey,
Seem'd dimly huge, the dark Abbaye.
When Hawick he pass'd, had curfew rung,[2]
Now midnight lauds were in Melrose sung.
The sound, upon the fitful gale,
In solemn wise did rise and fail,
Like that wild harp, whose magic tone
Is waken'd by the winds alone.
But when Melrose he reach'd, 'twas silence all;
He meetly stabled his steed in stall,
And sought the convent's lonely wall.

1 The scene of the skirmish in which the feud between the Scotts and the Kerrs began. Buccleuch was heading an attempt to carry the young King James V., then a minor, out of the power of the Douglases.

2 The curfew bell was rung at eight o'clock. This fixes the time of Deloraine's ride.

Here paused the harp; and with its swell
The Master's fire and courage fell:
Dejectedly, and low, he bow'd,
And, gazing timid on the crowd,
He seem'd to seek, in every eye,
If they approved his minstrelsy;
And, diffident of present praise,
Somewhat he spoke of former days,
And how old age, and wand'ring long,
Had done his hand and harp some wrong.
The Duchess, and her daughters fair,
And every gentle lady there,
Each after each, in due degree,
Gave praises to his melody;
His hand was true, his voice was clear,
And much they long'd the rest to hear.
Encouraged thus, the Aged Man,
After meet rest, again began.

## CANTO SECOND

I

If thou wouldst view fair Melrose aright,
Go visit it by the pale moonlight;
For the gay beams of lightsome day
Gild, but to flout, the ruins grey.
When the broken arches are black in night,
And each shafted oriel glimmers white;
When the cold light's uncertain shower
Streams on the ruin'd central tower;
When buttress and buttress, alternately,
Seem framed of ebon and ivory;
When silver edges the imagery,
And the scrolls that teach thee to live and die;
When distant Tweed is heard to rave,
And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave,

Then go—but go alone the while—
Then view St. David's ruin'd pile;[1]
And, home returning, soothly swear,
Was never scene so sad and fair!

II

Short halt did Deloraine make there;
Little reck'd he of the scene so fair:
With dagger's hilt, on the wicket strong,
He struck full loud, and struck full long.
The porter hurried to the gate—
"Who knocks so loud, and knocks so late?"
"From Branksome I," the warrior cried;
And straight the wicket open'd wide:
For Branksome's Chiefs had in battle stood,
To fence the rights of fair Melrose;
And lands and livings, many a rood,
Had gifted the shrine for their souls' repose.

III

Bold Deloraine his errand said;
The porter bent his humble head;
With torch in hand, and feet unshod,
And noiseless step, the path he trod:
The arched cloister, far and wide,
Rang to the warrior's clanking stride,
Till, stooping low his lofty crest,
He enter'd the cell of the ancient priest,
And lifted his barred aventayle,[2]
To hail the Monk of St. Mary's aisle.

IV

"The Ladye of Branksome greets thee by me;
Says, that the fated hour is come,
And that to-night I shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb."
From sackcloth couch the monk arose,
With toil his stiffen'd limbs he rear'd;
A hundred years had flung their snows
On his thin locks and floating beard.

1 The Abbey was founded in 1136 by David I., who for this and other acts of pious munificence earned the reputation of being "a sore saint for the crown."

2 *Aventayle*, visor of the helmet.

V

And strangely on the Knight look'd he,
And his blue eyes gleam'd wild and wide;
"And darest thou, Warrior! seek to see
What heaven and hell alike would hide?
My breast, in belt of iron pent,
With shirt of hair and scourge of thorn;
For threescore years, in penance spent,
My knees those flinty stones have worn;
Yet all too little to atone
For knowing what should ne'er be known.
Would'st thou thy every future year
In ceaseless prayer and penance drie,
Yet wait thy latter end with fear—
Then, daring Warrior, follow me!"

VI

"Penance, father, will I none;
Prayer know I hardly one;
For mass or prayer can I rarely tarry,
Save to patter an Ave Mary,
When I ride on a Border foray.
Other prayer can I none;
So speed me my errand, and let me be gone."

VII

Again on the Knight look'd the Churchman old,
And again he sighed heavily;
For he had himself been a warrior bold,
And fought in Spain and Italy.
And he thought on the days that were long since by,
When his limbs were strong and his courage was high:—
Now, slow and faint, he led the way,
Where, cloister'd round, the garden lay;
The pillar'd arches were over their head,
And beneath their feet were the bones of the dead.

VIII

Spreading herbs, and flowerets bright,
Glisten'd with the dew of night;

Nor herb, nor floweret, glisten'd there,
But was carved in the cloister-arches as fair.
The Monk gazed long on the lovely moon,
Then into the night he looked forth;
And red and bright the streamers light
Were dancing in the glowing north.
So had he seen, in fair Castile,
The youth in glittering squadrons start;
Sudden the flying jennet wheel,
And hurl the unexpected dart.
He knew, by the streamers that shot so bright,
That spirits were riding the northern light.

IX

By a steel-clenched postern door,
They enter'd now the chancel tall;
The darken'd roof rose high aloof
On pillars lofty and light and small:
The key-stone, that lock'd each ribbed aisle,
Was a fleur-de-lys, or a quatre-feuille;
The corbels were carved grotesque and grim;
And the pillars, with cluster'd shafts so trim,
With base and with capital flourish'd around,
Seem'd bundles of lances which garlands had bound.

X

Full many a scutcheon and banner riven,
Shook to the cold night-wind of heaven,
Around the screened altar's pale;
And there the dying lamps did burn,
Before thy low and lonely urn,
O gallant chief of Otterburne![1]
And thine, dark Knight of Liddesdale!
O fading honours of the dead!
O high ambition, lowly laid!

XI

The moon on the east oriel shone
Through slender shafts of shapely stone,
By foliaged tracery combined;
Thou would'st have thought some fairy's hand

[1] The Douglas of Otterburne was buried in Melrose Abbey. The Knight of Liddesdale was another famous Douglas.

'Twixt poplars straight the ozier wand,
In many a freakish knot, had twined;
Then framed a spell, when the work was done,
And changed the willow-wreaths to stone.
The silver light, so pale and faint,
Show'd many a prophet, and many a saint,
Whose image on the glass was dyed;
Full in the midst, his Cross of Red
Triumphant Michael brandished,
And trampled the Apostate's pride.
The moonbeam kiss'd the holy pane,
And threw on the pavement a bloody stain.

XII

They sate them down on a marble stone
(A Scottish monarch slept below);
Thus spoke the Monk, in solemn tone:—
"I was not always a man of woe;
For Paynim countries I have trod,
And fought beneath the Cross of God:
Now, strange to my eyes thine arms appear,
And their iron clang sounds strange to my ear.

XIII

"In these far climes it was my lot
To meet the wondrous Michael Scott,[1]
A wizard, of such dreaded fame,
That when, in Salamanca's cave,
Him listed his magic wand to wave,
The bells would ring in Notre Dame!
Some of his skill he taught to me;
And, Warrior, I could say to thee
The words that cleft Eildon hills in three,
And bridled the Tweed with a curb of stone:
But to speak them were a deadly sin;
And for having but thought them my heart within,
A treble penance must be done.

[1] The historical Michael Scott lived in the thirteenth century contemporary with Roger Bacon, and like him earned the character of a wizard or magician by his learning and research.

XIV

"When Michael lay on his dying bed,
His conscience was awakened:
He bethought him of his sinful deed,
And he gave me a sign to come with speed:
I was in Spain when the morning rose,
But I stood by his bed ere evening close.
The words may not again be said,
That he spoke to me, on death-bed laid;
They would rend this Abbaye's massy nave,
And pile it in heaps above his grave.

XV

"I swore to bury his Mighty Book,
That never mortal might therein look;
And never to tell where it was hid,
Save at his Chief of Branksome's need:
And when that need was past and o'er,
Again the volume to restore.
I buried him on St. Michael's night,
When the bell toll'd one, and the moon was bright,
And I dug his chamber among the dead,
When the floor of the chancel was stained red,
That his patron's cross might over him wave,
And scare the fiends from the Wizard's grave.

XVI

"It was a night of woe and dread,
When Michael in the tomb I laid!
Strange sounds along the chancel pass'd,
The banners waved without a blast"—
—Still spoke the Monk, when the bell toll'd one!—
I tell you, that a braver man
Than William of Deloraine, good at need,
Against a foe ne'er spurr'd a steed;
Yet somewhat was he chill'd with dread,
And his hair did bristle upon his head.

XVII

"Lo, Warrior! now the Cross of Red
Points to the grave of the mighty dead;*

Within it burns a wondrous light,
To chase the spirits that love the night:
That lamp shall burn unquenchably,
Until the eternal doom shall be."—
Slow moved the Monk to the broad flag-stone,
Which the bloody Cross was traced upon:
He pointed to a secret nook;
An iron bar the Warrior took;
And the Monk made a sign with his wither'd hand,
The grave's huge portal to expand.

XVIII

With beating heart to the task he went;
His sinewy frame o'er the grave-stone bent;
With bar of iron heaved amain,
Till the toil-drops fell from his brows, like rain.
It was by dint of passing strength,
That he moved the massy stone at length.
I would you had been there, to see
How the light broke forth so gloriously,
Stream'd upward to the chancel roof,
And through the galleries far aloof!
No earthly flame blazed e'er so bright:
It shone like heaven's own blessed light,
And, issuing from the tomb,
Show'd the Monk's cowl, and visage pale,
Danced on the dark-brow'd Warrior's mail,
And kiss'd his waving plume.

XIX

Before their eyes the Wizard lay,
As if he had not been dead a day.
His hoary beard in silver roll'd,
He seem'd some seventy winters old;
A palmer's amice wrapp'd him round,
With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,
Like a pilgrim from beyond the sea:
His left hand held his Book of Might;
A silver cross was in his right;
The lamp was placed beside his knee:

High and majestic was his look,
At which the fellest fiends had shook,
And all unruffled was his face:
They trusted his soul had gotten grace.

XX

Often had William of Deloraine
Rode through the battle's bloody plain,
And trampled down the warriors slain,
And neither known remorse nor awe;
Yet now remorse and awe he own'd;
His breath came thick, his head swam round,
When this strange scene of death he saw.
Bewilder'd and unnerv'd he stood,
And the priest pray'd fervently and loud:
With eyes averted prayed he;
He might not endure the sight to see,
Of the man he had loved so brotherly.

XXI

And when the priest his death-prayer had pray'd,
Thus unto Deloraine he said:—
"Now, speed thee what thou hast to do,
Or, Warrior, we may dearly rue;
For those, thou may'st not look upon,
Are gathering fast round the yawning stone!"—
Then Deloraine, in terror, took
From the cold hand the Mighty Book,
With iron clasp'd, and with iron bound:
He thought, as he took it, the dead man frown'd;
But the glare of the sepulchral light,
Perchance, had dazzled the warrior's sight.

XXII

When the huge stone sunk o'er the tomb,
The night return'd in double gloom;
For the moon had gone down, and the stars were few;
And, as the Knight and Priest withdrew,
With wavering steps and dizzy brain,
They hardly might the postern gain.
'Tis said, as through the aisles they pass'd,
They heard strange noises on the blast;

And through the cloister-galleries small,
Which at mid-height thread the chancel wall,
Loud sobs, and laughter louder, ran,
And voices unlike the voice of man;
As if the fiends kept holiday,
Because these spells were brought to day.
I cannot tell how the truth may be;
I say the tale as 'twas said to me.

XXIII

"Now, hie thee hence," the Father said,
"And when we are on death-bed laid,
O may our dear Ladye, and sweet St. John,
Forgive our souls for the deed we have done!"—
The Monk return'd him to his cell,
And many a prayer and penance sped;
When the convent met at the noontide bell—
The Monk of St. Mary's aisle was dead!
Before the cross was the body laid,
With hands clasp'd fast, as if still he pray'd.

XXIV

The Knight breathed free in the morning wind,
And strove his hardihood to find:
He was glad when he pass'd the tombstones grey,
Which girdle round the fair Abbaye;
For the Mystic Book, to his bosom prest,
Felt like a load upon his breast;
And his joints, with nerves of iron twined,
Shook, like the aspen leaves in wind.
Full fain was he when the dawn of day
Began to brighten Cheviot grey;
He joy'd to see the cheerful light,
And he said Ave Mary, as well as he might.

XXV

The sun had brighten'd Cheviot grey,
The sun had brighten'd the Carter's[1] side;
And soon beneath the rising day
Smiled Branksome towers and Teviot's tide.

[1] A mountain on the Border of England, above Jedburgh.

The wild birds told their warbling tale,
And waken'd every flower that blows;
And peeped forth the violet pale,
And spread her breast the mountain rose.
And lovelier than the rose so red,
Yet paler than the violet pale,
She early left her sleepless bed,
The fairest maid of Teviotdale.

XXVI

Why does fair Margaret * so early awake,
And don her kirtle so hastilie;
And the silken knots, which in hurry she would make,
Why tremble her slender fingers to tie;
Why does she stop, and look often around,
As she glides down the secret stair;
And why does she pat the shaggy blood-hound,
As he rouses him up from his lair;
And, though she passes the postern alone,
Why is not the watchman's bugle blown?

XXVII

The Ladye steps in doubt and dread,
Lest her watchful mother hear her tread;
The Ladye caresses the rough blood-hound,
Lest his voice should waken the castle round;
The watchman's bugle is not blown,
For he was her foster-father's son;
And she glides through the greenwood at dawn of light
To meet Baron Henry, her own true knight.

XXVIII

The Knight and Ladye fair are met,
And under the hawthorn's boughs are set.
A fairer pair were never seen
To meet beneath the hawthorn green.
He was stately, and young, and tall;
Dreaded in battle, and loved in hall:
And she, when love, scarce told, scarce hid,
Lent to her cheek a livelier red;

When the half sigh her swelling breast
Against the silken ribbon prest;
When her blue eyes their secret told,
Though shaded by her locks of gold—
Where would you find the peerless fair,
With Margaret of Branksome might compare!

XXIX

And now, fair dames, methinks I see
You listen to my minstrelsy;
Your waving locks ye backward throw,
And sidelong bend your necks of snow:
Ye ween to hear a melting tale,
Of two true lovers in a dale;
And how the Knight, with tender fire,
To paint his faithful passion strove;
Swore he might at her feet expire,
But never, never cease to love;
And how she blush'd, and how she sigh'd,
And, half consenting, half denied,
And said that she would die a maid;—
Yet, might the bloody feud be stay'd,
Henry of Cranstoun, and only he,
Margaret of Branksome's choice should be.

XXX

Alas! fair dames, your hopes are vain!
My harp has lost the enchanting strain;
Its lightness would my age reprove:
My hairs are grey, my limbs are old,
My heart is dead, my veins are cold:
I may not, must not, sing of love.

XXXI

Beneath an oak, moss'd o'er by eld,
The Baron's Dwarf his courser held,
And held his crested helm and spear:
That Dwarf was scarce an earthly man,
If the tales were true that of him ran
Through all the Border, far and near.

'Twas said, when the Baron a-hunting rode
Through Reedsdale's glens, but rarely trod,
He heard a voice cry, "Lost! lost! lost!"
And, like tennis-ball by racket toss'd,
A leap, of thirty feet and three,
Made from the gorse this elfin shape,
Distorted like some dwarfish ape,
And lighted at Lord Cranstoun's knee.
Lord Cranstoun was some whit dismay'd;
'Tis said that five good miles he rade,
To rid him of his company;
But where he rode one mile, the Dwarf ran four,
And the Dwarf was first at the castle door.

XXXII

Use lessens marvel, it is said:
This elfish Dwarf with the Baron staid;
Little he ate, and less he spoke,
Nor mingled with the menial flock:
And oft apart his arms he toss'd,
And often mutter'd, "Lost! lost! lost!"
He was waspish, arch, and litherlie,
But well Lord Cranstoun served he:
And he of his service was full fain;
For once he had been ta'en or slain,
An it had not been for his ministry.
All between Home and Hermitage,
Talk'd of Lord Cranstoun's Goblin-Page.

XXXIII

For the Baron went on pilgrimage,
And took with him this elvish Page,
To Mary's Chapel of the Lowes:
For there, beside Our Ladye's lake,
An offering he had sworn to make,
And he would pay his vows.
But the Ladye of Branksome gather'd a band
Of the best that would ride at her command:
The trysting-place was Newark Lee.
Wat of Harden came thither amain,

And thither came John of Thirlestane,[1]
And thither came William of Deloraine;
They were three hundred spears and three.
Through Douglas-burn, up Yarrow stream,
Their horses prance, their lances gleam.
They came to St. Mary's lake ere day;
But the chapel was void, and the Baron away.
They burn'd the chapel for very rage,
And cursed Lord Cranstoun's Goblin-Page.

XXXIV

And now, in Branksome's good greenwood,
As under the aged oak he stood,
The Baron's courser pricks his ears,
As if a distant noise he hears.
The Dwarf waves his long lean arm on high,
And signs to the lovers to part and fly;
No time was then to vow or sigh.
Fair Margaret through the hazel grove
Flew like the startled cushat-dove:[2]
The Dwarf the stirrup held and rein;
Vaulted the Knight on his steed amain,
And, pondering deep that morning's scene,
Rode eastward through the hawthorns green.

---

While thus he pour'd the lengthen'd tale,
The Minstrel's voice began to fail:
Full slyly smiled the observant page,
And gave the wither'd hand of age
A goblet, crown'd with mighty wine,
The blood of Velez' scorched vine.
He raised the silver cup on high,
And, while the big drop fill'd his eye,
Pray'd God to bless the Duchess long,
And all who cheer'd a son of song.
The attending maidens smiled to see
How long, how deep, how zealously,

[1] Wat of Harden was an ancestor of the poet: John of Thirlestane of Lord Napier, Lord-Lieutenant of the county (Selkirk) of which Scott was Sheriff.

[2] Wood-pigeon.

The precious juice the Minstrel quaff'd;
And he, embolden'd by the draught,
Look'd gaily back to them, and laugh'd.
The cordial nectar of the bowl
Swell'd his old veins, and cheer'd his soul;
A lighter, livelier prelude ran,
Ere thus his tale again began.

## CANTO THIRD

I

And said I that my limbs were old,
And said I that my blood was cold,
And that my kindly fire was fled,
And my poor wither'd heart was dead,
  And that I might not sing of love?—
How could I, to the dearest theme
That ever warm'd a minstrel's dream,
  So foul, so false a recreant prove!
How could I name love's very name,
Nor wake my heart to notes of flame!

II

In peace, Love tunes the shepherd's reed;
In war, he mounts the warrior's steed;
In halls, in gay attire is seen;
In hamlets, dances on the green.
Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,
And men below, and saints above;
For love is heaven, and heaven is love.

III

So thought Lord Cranstoun, as I ween,
While, pondering deep the tender scene,
He rode through Branksome's hawthorn green.
  But the page shouted wild and shrill,
    And scarce his helmet could he don,
  When downward from the shady hill
    A stately knight came pricking on.

That warrior's steed, so dapple-grey,
Was dark with sweat, and splash'd with clay;
His armour red with many a stain:
He seem'd in such a weary plight,
As if he had ridden the live-long night;
For it was William of Deloraine.

IV

But no whit weary did he seem,
When, dancing in the sunny beam,
He mark'd the crane on the Baron's crest;[1]
For his ready spear was in his rest.
Few were the words, and stern and high,
That mark'd the foemen's feudal hate;
For question fierce, and proud reply,
Gave signal soon of dire debate.
Their very coursers seem'd to know
That each was other's mortal foe,
And snorted fire, when wheel'd around,
To give each knight his vantage-ground.

V

In rapid round the Baron bent;
He sigh'd a sigh, and pray'd a prayer;
The prayer was to his patron saint,
The sigh was to his ladye fair.
Stout Deloraine nor sigh'd nor pray'd,
Nor saint, nor ladye, call'd to aid;
But he stoop'd his head, and couch'd his spear,
And spurr'd his steed to full career.
The meeting of these champions proud
Seem'd like the bursting thunder-cloud.

VI

Stern was the dint the Borderer lent!
The stately Baron backwards bent;
Bent backwards to his horse's tail,
And his plumes went scattering on the gale;

[1] The crest of the Cranstouns, in allusion to their name, is a crane dormant, holding a stone in his foot, with an emphatic Border motto—*Thou shalt want ere I want.*

The tough ash spear, so stout and true,
Into a thousand flinders flew.
But Cranstoun's lance, of more avail,
Pierced through, like silk, the Borderer's mail;
Through shield, and jack, and acton, past,
Deep in his bosom broke at last.—
Still sate the warrior, saddle-fast,
Till, stumbling in the mortal shock,
Down went the steed, the girthing broke,
Hurl'd on a heap lay man and horse.
The Baron onward pass'd his course;
Nor knew—so giddy roll'd his brain—
His foe lay stretched upon the plain.

VII

But when he rein'd his courser round,
And saw his foeman on the ground
Lie senseless as the bloody clay,
He bade his page to stanch the wound,
And there beside the warrior stay,
And tend him in his doubtful state,
And lead him to Branksome castle-gate:
His noble mind was inly moved
For the kinsman of the maid he loved.
"This shalt thou do without delay:
No longer here myself may stay;
Unless the swifter I speed away,
Short shrift will be at my dying day."

VIII

Away in speed Lord Cranstoun rode;
The Goblin-Page * behind abode;
His lord's command he ne'er withstood,
Though small his pleasure to do good.
As the corslet off he took,
The dwarf espied the Mighty Book!
Much he marvell'd a knight of pride,
Like a book-bosom'd priest should ride:
He thought not to search or stanch the wound,
Until the secret he had found.

IX

The iron band, the iron clasp,
Resisted long the elfin grasp:
For when the first he had undone,
It closed as he the next begun.
Those iron clasps, that iron band,
Would not yield to unchristen'd hand,
Till he smear'd the cover o'er
With the Borderer's curdled gore;
A moment then the volume spread,
And one short spell therein he read,
It had much of glamour[1] might,*
Could make a ladye seem a knight;
The cobwebs on a dungeon wall
Seem tapestry in lordly hall;
A nut-shell seem a gilded barge,
A sheeling[2] seem a palace large,
And youth seem age, and age seem youth—
All was delusion, nought was truth.

X

He had not read another spell,
When on his cheek a buffet fell,
So fierce, it stretch'd him on the plain,
Beside the wounded Deloraine.
From the ground he rose dismay'd,
And shook his huge and matted head;
One word he mutter'd, and no more,
"Man of age, thou smitest sore!"—
No more the Elfin Page durst try
Into the wondrous Book to pry;
The clasps, though smear'd with Christian gore,
Shut faster than they were before.
He hid it underneath his cloak.—
Now, if you ask who gave the stroke,
I cannot tell, so mot I thrive;
It was not given by man alive.

XI

Unwillingly himself he address'd
To do his master's high behest:

[1] Magical delusion. [2] A shepherd's hut.

He lifted up the living corse,
And laid it on the weary horse;
He led him into Branksome-Hall,
Before the beards of the warders all;
And each did after swear and say,
There only pass'd a wain of hay.
He took him to Lord David's tower,
Even to the Ladye's secret bower;
And, but that stronger spells were spread,
And the door might not be opened,
He had laid him on her very bed.
Whate'er he did of gramarye,[1]
Was always done maliciously;
He flung the warrior on the ground,
And the blood well'd freshly from the wound.

XII

As he repass'd the outer court,
He spied the fair young child at sport:
He thought to train him to the wood;
For, at a word, be it understood,
He was always for ill, and never for good.
Seem'd to the boy, some comrade gay
Led him forth to the woods to play;
On the drawbridge the warders stout
Saw a terrier and lurcher passing out.

XIII

He led the boy o'er bank and fell,
Until they came to a woodland brook;
The running stream dissolved the spell,
And his own elvish shape he took.
Could he have had his pleasure vilde,
He had crippled the joints of the noble child;
Or, with his fingers long and lean,
Had strangled him in fiendish spleen:
But his awful mother he had in dread,
And also his power was limited;
So he but scowl'd on the startled child,
And darted through the forest wild;
The woodland brook he bounding cross'd,
And laugh'd, and shouted, "Lost! lost! lost!"—

[1] Magic.

XIV

Full sore amazed at the wondrous change,
And frighten'd as a child might be,
At the wild yell and visage strange,
And the dark words of gramarye,
The child, amidst the forest bower,
Stood rooted like a lily flower;
And when at length, with trembling pace,
He sought to find where Branksome lay,
He fear'd to see that grisly face
Glare from some thicket on his way.
Thus, starting oft, he journey'd on,
And deeper in the wood is gone,—
For aye the more he sought his way,
The farther still he went astray,—
Until he heard the mountains round
Ring to the baying of a hound.

XV

And hark! and hark! the deep-mouth'd bark
Comes nigher still, and nigher:
Bursts on the path a dark blood-hound,
His tawny muzzle track'd the ground,
And his red eye shot fire.
Soon as the wilder'd child saw he,
He flew at him right furiouslie.
I ween you would have seen with joy
The bearing of the gallant boy,
When, worthy of his noble sire,
His wet cheek glow'd 'twixt fear and ire!
He faced the blood-hound manfully,
And held his little bat on high;
So fierce he struck, the dog, afraid,
At cautious distance hoarsely bay'd,
But still in act to spring;
When dash'd an archer through the glade,
And when he saw the hound was stay'd,
He drew his tough bow-string;
But a rough voice cried, "Shoot not, hoy!
Ho! shoot not, Edward—'Tis a boy!"

XVI

The speaker issued from the wood,
And check'd his fellow's surly mood,
And quell'd the ban-dog's ire:
He was an English yeoman good,
And born in Lancashire.
Well could he hit a fallow-deer
Five hundred feet him fro;
With hand more true, and eye more clear,
No archer bended bow.
His coal-black hair, shorn round and close,
Set off his sun-burn'd face:
Old England's sign, St. George's cross,
His barret-cap did grace;
His bugle-horn hung by his side,
All in a wolf-skin baldric tied;
And his short falchion, sharp and clear,
Had pierced the throat of many a deer.

XVII

His kirtle, made of forest green,
Reach'd scantly to his knee;
And, at his belt, of arrows keen
A furbish'd sheaf bore he;
His buckler, scarce in breadth a span,
No larger fence had he;
He never counted him a man,
Would strike below the knee:
His slacken'd bow was in his hand,
And the leash, that was his blood-hound's band.

XVIII

He would not do the fair child harm,
But held him with his powerful arm,
That he might neither fight nor flee;
For when the Red-Cross spied he,
The boy strove long and violently.
"Now, by St. George," the archer cries,
"Edward, methinks we have a prize!
This boy's fair face, and courage free,
Show he is come of high degree."—

XIX

"Yes! I am come of high degree,
For I am the heir of bold Buccleuch;
And, if thou dost not set me free,
False Southron, thou shalt dearly rue!
For Walter of Harden shall come with speed,
And William of Deloraine, good at need,
And every Scott, from Esk to Tweed;
And, if thou dost not let me go,
Despite thy arrows, and thy bow,
I'll have thee hang'd to feed the crow!"—

XX

"Gramercy, for thy good-will, fair boy!
My mind was never set so high;
But if thou art chief of such a clan,
And art the son of such a man,
And ever comest to thy command,
Our wardens had need to keep good order;
My bow of yew to a hazel wand,
Thou'lt make them work upon the Border.
Meantime, be pleased to come with me,
For good Lord Dacre shalt thou see;
I think our work is well begun,
When we have taken thy father's son."

XXI

Although the child was led away,
In Branksome still he seem'd to stay,
For so the Dwarf his part did play;
And, in the shape of that young boy,
He wrought the castle much annoy.
The comrades of the young Buccleuch
He pinch'd, and beat, and overthrew;
Nay, some of them he well-nigh slew.
He tore Dame Maudlin's silken tire,
And, as Sym Hall stood by the fire,
He lighted the match of his bandelier,[1]
And wofully scorch'd the hackbuteer.[2]

[1] *Bandelier*, belt for carrying ammunition. [2] *Hackbuteer*, musketeer.

It may be hardly thought or said,
The mischief that the urchin made,
Till many of the castle guess'd
That the young Baron was possess'd!

XXII

Well I ween the charm he held
The noble Ladye had soon dispell'd;
But she was deeply busied then
To tend the wounded Deloraine.
Much she wonder'd to find him lie,
On the stone threshold stretch'd along;
She thought some spirit of the sky
Had done the bold moss-trooper wrong;
Because, despite her precept dread,
Perchance he in the Book had read;
But the broken lance in his bosom stood,
And it was earthly steel and wood.

XXIII

She drew the splinter from the wound,
And with a charm she stanch'd the blood;*
She bade the gash be cleansed and bound:
No longer by his couch she stood;
But she has ta'en the broken lance,
And wash'd it from the clotted gore,
And salved the splinter o'er and o'er.
William of Deloraine, in trance,
Whene'er she turn'd it round and round,
Twisted as if she gall'd his wound.
Then to her maidens she did say,
That he should be whole man and sound,
Within the course of a night and day.
Full long she toil'd; for she did rue,
Mishap to friend so stout and true.

XXIV

So pass'd the day—the evening fell,
'Twas near the time of curfew bell;
The air was mild, the wind was calm,
The stream was smooth, the dew was balm;

E'en the rude watchman, on the tower,
Enjoy'd and bless'd the lovely hour.
Far more fair Margaret loved and bless'd
The hour of silence and of rest.
On the high turret sitting lone,
She waked at times the lute's soft tone;
Touch'd a wild note, and all between
Thought of the bower of hawthorns green.
Her golden hair stream'd free from band,
Her fair cheek rested on her hand,
Her blue eyes sought the west afar,
For lovers love the western star.

XXV

Is yon the star, o'er Penchryst Pen,
That rises slowly to her ken,
And, spreading broad its wavering light,
Shakes its loose tresses on the night?
Is yon red glare the western star?—
Oh! 'tis the beacon-blaze of war!
Scarce could she draw her tighten'd breath,
For well she knew the fire of death!

XXVI

The warder view'd it blazing strong,
And blew his war-note loud and long,
Till, at the high and haughty sound,
Rock, wood, and river, rung around.
The blast alarm'd the festal hall,
And startled forth the warriors all;
Far downward, in the castle-yard,
Full many a torch and cresset glared;
And helms and plumes, confusedly toss'd,
Were in the blaze half-seen, half-lost;
And spears in wild disorder shook,
Like reeds beside a frozen brook.

XXVII

The Seneschal, whose silver hair
Was redden'd by the torches' glare,
Stood in the midst, with gesture proud,
And issued forth his mandates loud:—

"On Penchryst glows a bale of fire,[1]
And three are kindling on Priesthaughswire;
Ride out, ride out,
The foe to scout!
Mount, mount for Branksome, every man!
Thou, Todrig, warn the Johnstone clan,
That ever are true and stout—
Ye need not send to Liddesdale;
For when they see the blazing bale,
Elliots and Armstrongs never fail.—
Ride, Alton, ride, for death and life!
And warn the Warder of the strife.
Young Gilbert, let our beacon blaze,
Our kin, and clan, and friends, to raise."

XXVIII

Fair Margaret, from the turret head,
Heard, far below, the coursers' tread,
While loud the harness rung,
As to their seats, with clamour dread,
The ready horsemen sprung:
And trampling hoofs, and iron coats,
And leaders' voices, mingled notes,
And out! and out!
In hasty route,
The horsemen gallop'd forth;
Dispersing to the south to scout,
And east, and west, and north,
To view their coming enemies,
And warn their vassals and allies.

XXIX

The ready page, with hurried hand,
Awaked the need-fire's[2] slumbering brand,
And ruddy blush'd the heaven:
For a sheet of flame, from the turret high,
Waved like a blood-flag on the sky,
All flaring and uneven;

1 The beacon fires were so arranged as to form a line of telegraphic communication, along which the approach of an enemy could be signalled and the clans called out for defence.

2 *Need-fire*, beacon.

And soon a score of fires, I ween,
From height, and hill, and cliff, were seen;
Each with warlike tidings fraught;
Each from each the signal caught;
Each after each they glanced to sight,
As stars arise upon the night.
They gleam'd on many a dusky tarn,[1]
Haunted by the lonely earn;[2]
On many a cairn's grey pyramid,
Where urns of mighty chiefs lie hid;
Till high Dunedin the blazes saw,
From Soltra and Dumpender Law;
And Lothian heard the Regent's order,
That all should bowne[3] them for the Border.

XXX

The livelong night in Branksome rang
The ceaseless sound of steel;
The castle-bell, with backward clang,
Sent forth the larum peal;
Was frequent heard the heavy jar,
Where massy stone and iron bar
Were piled on echoing keep and tower,
To whelm the foe with deadly shower;
Was frequent heard the changing guard,
And watch-word from the sleepless ward;
While, wearied by the endless din,
Blood-hound and ban-dog yell'd within.

XXXI

The noble Dame, amid the broil,
Shared the grey Seneschal's high toil,
And spoke of danger with a smile;
Cheer'd the young knights, and council sage
Held with the chiefs of riper age.
No tidings of the foe were brought,
Nor of his numbers knew they aught,
Nor what in time of truce he sought.
Some said that there were thousands ten;
And others ween'd that it was nought

[1] *Tarn*, a mountain lake. [2] *Earn*, a Scottish eagle.
[3] *Bowne*, make ready.

But Leven Clans, or Tynedale men,
Who came to gather in black-mail;
And Liddesdale, with small avail,
Might drive them lightly back agen.
So pass'd the anxious night away
And welcome was the peep of day.

---

Ceased the high sound—the listening throng
Applaud the Master of the Song;
And marvel much, in helpless age,
So hard should be his pilgrimage.
Had he no friend—no daughter dear,
His wandering toil to share and cheer;
No son to be his father's stay,
And guide him on the rugged way?
"Ay, once he had—but he was dead!"—
Upon the harp he stoop'd his head,
And busied himself the strings withal,
To hide the tear that fain would fall.
In solemn measure, soft and slow,
Arose a father's notes of woe.

## CANTO FOURTH

I

Sweet Teviot! on thy silver tide
The glaring bale-fires blaze no more;
No longer steel-clad warriors ride
Along thy wild and willow'd shore;
Where'er thou wind'st, by dale or hill,
All, all is peaceful, all is still,
As if thy waves, since Time was born,
Since first they roll'd upon the Tweed,
Had only heard the shepherd's reed,
Nor started at the bugle-horn.

II

Unlike the tide of human time,
Which, though it change in ceaseless flow,
Retains each grief, retains each crime,
Its earliest course was doom'd to know;
And, darker as it downward bears,
Is stained with past and present tears.
Low as that tide has ebb'd with me,
It still reflects to Memory's eye
The hour my brave, my only boy,
Fell by the side of great Dundee.[1]
Why, when the volleying musket play'd
Against the bloody Highland blade,
Why was not I beside him laid!—
Enough—he died the death of fame;
Enough—he died with conquering Græme.

III

Now over Border dale and fell,
Full wide and far was terror spread;
For pathless marsh, and mountain cell,
The peasant left his lowly shed.
The frighten'd flocks and herds were pent
Beneath the peel's rude battlement;
And maids and matrons dropp'd the tear,
While ready warriors seized the spear.
From Branksome's towers, the watchman's eye
Dun wreaths of distant smoke can spy,
Which, curling in the rising sun,
Show'd southern ravage was begun.

IV

Now loud the heedful gate-ward cried—
"Prepare ye all for blows and blood!
Watt Tinlinn,[2] from the Liddel-side,
Comes wading through the flood.
Full oft the Tynedale snatchers knock
At his lone gate, and prove the lock;

[1] Claverhouse, slain at the battle of Killiecrankie, 1689.

[2] A real personage in Border tradition. He was a retainer of the Buccleuch family, and held for his Border service a small tower on the frontiers of Liddesdale, where he acted as an extreme outpost.

It was but last St. Barnabright
They sieged him a whole summer night,
But fled at morning; well they knew,
In vain he never twang'd the yew.
Right sharp has been the evening shower,
That drove him from his Liddel tower;
And, by my faith," the gate-ward said,
"I think 'twill prove a Warden-Raid."[1]

V

While thus he spoke, the bold yeoman
Entered the echoing barbican.
He led a small and shaggy nag,
That through a bog, from hag to hag,[2]
Could bound like any Billhope stag.
It bore his wife and children twain;
A half-clothed serf was all their train:
His wife, stout, ruddy, and dark-brow'd,
Of silver brooch and bracelet proud,
Laughed to her friends among the crowd.
He was of stature passing tall,
But sparely form'd, and lean withal;
A batter'd morion on his brow;
A leather jack, as fence enow,
On his broad shoulders loosely hung;
A Border axe behind was slung;
His spear, six Scottish ells in length,
Seem'd newly dyed with gore;
His shafts and bow, of wondrous strength,
His hardy partner bore.

VI

Thus to the Ladye did Tinlinn show
The tidings of the English foe:—
"Belted Will Howard[3] is marching here,
And hot Lord Dacre, with many a spear.
And all the German hackbut-men,[4]
Who have long lain at Askerten;

1 An inroad commanded by the Warden in person.

2 The broken ground in a bog.

3 Howard and Dacre were famous Wardens of the Border on the English side.

4 Henry VIII. and his successors often employed foreign mercenaries in their wars with Scotland.

They cross'd the Liddel at curfew hour,
And burn'd my little lonely tower:
The fiend receive their souls therefor!
It had not been burnt this year and more.
Barn-yard and dwelling, blazing bright,
Served to guide me on my flight;
But I was chased the livelong night.
Black John of Akeshaw, and Fergus Græme,
Fast upon my traces came,
Until I turn'd at Priesthaugh Scrogg,
And shot their horses in the bog,
Slew Fergus with my lance outright—
I had him long at high despite:
He drove my cows last Fastern's night."

VII

Now weary scouts from Liddesdale,
Fast hurrying in, confirm'd the tale;
As far as they could judge by ken,
Three hours would bring to Teviot's strand
Three thousand armed Englishmen—
Meanwhile, full many a warlike band,
From Teviot, Aill, and Ettrick shade,
Came in, their Chief's defence to aid.
There was saddling and mounting in haste,
There was pricking o'er moor and lea;
He that was last at the trysting-place
Was but lightly held of his gay ladye.

VIII

From fair St. Mary's silver wave,
From dreary Gamescleugh's dusky height,
His ready lances Thirlestane brave
Array'd beneath a banner bright.
The tressured fleur-de-luce * he claims
To wreathe his shield, since royal James,
Encamp'd by Falla's mossy wave,
The proud distinction grateful gave,
For faith 'mid feudal jars;
What time, save Thirlestane alone,
Of Scotland's stubborn barons none
Would march to southern wars;

And hence, in fair remembrance worn,
Yon sheaf of spears his crest has borne;
Hence his high motto shines reveal'd—
"Ready, aye ready," for the field.

IX

An aged Knight, to danger steel'd,
With many a moss-trooper, came on;
And azure in a golden field,
The stars and crescent graced his shield,
Without the bend of Murdieston.*
Wide lay his lands round Oakwood * tower,
And wide round haunted Castle-Ower;
High over Borthwick's mountain flood,
His wood-embosom'd mansion stood;
In the dark glen, so deep below,
The herds of plunder'd England low;
His bold retainers' daily food,
And bought with danger, blows, and blood.
Marauding chief! his sole delight
The moonlight raid, the morning fight;
Not even the Flower of Yarrow's * charms,
In youth, might tame his rage for arms;
And still, in age, he spurn'd at rest,
And still his brows the helmet press'd,
Albeit the blanched locks below
Were white as Dinlay's spotless snow:*
Five stately warriors drew the sword
Before their father's band;
A braver knight than Harden's lord
Ne'er belted on a brand.

X

Scotts of Eskdale, a stalwart band,
Came trooping down the Todshawhill;
By the sword they won their land,
And by the sword they hold it still.
Hearken, Ladye, to the tale,
How thy sires won fair Eskdale.—
Earl Morton was lord of that valley fair,
The Beattisons were his vassals there.

The Earl was gentle, and mild of mood,
The vassals were warlike, and fierce, and rude;
High of heart, and haughty of word,
Little they reck'd of a tame liege lord.
The Earl into fair Eskdale came,
Homage and seignory to claim:
Of Gilbert the Galliard a heriot[1] he sought,
Saying, "Give thy best steed, as a vassal ought."
"Dear to me is my bonny white steed,
Oft has he help'd me at pinch of need;
Lord and Earl though thou be, I trow
I can rein Bucksfoot better than thou."—
Word on word gave fuel to fire,
Till so highly blazed the Beattisons' ire,
But that the Earl the flight had ta'en,
The vassals there their lord had slain.
Sore he plied both whip and spur,
As he urged his steed through Eskdale muir;
And it fell down a weary weight,
Just on the threshold of Branksome gate.

XI

The Earl was a wrathful man to see,
Full fain avenged would he be.
In haste to Branksome's Lord he spoke,
Saying, "Take these traitors to thy yoke;
For a cast of hawks, and a purse of gold,
All Eskdale I'll sell thee, to have and hold:
Beshrew thy heart, of the Beattisons' clan
If thou leavest on Eske a landed man;
But spare Woodkerrick's lands alone,
For he lent me his horse to escape upon."
A glad man then was Branksome bold,
Down he flung him the purse of gold;
To Eskdale soon he spurr'd amain,
And with him five hundred riders has ta'en.
He left his merrymen in the mist of the hill,
And bade them hold them close and still;
And alone he wended to the plain,
To meet with the Galliard and all his train.

[1] The feudal superior, in certain cases, was entitled to the best horse of the vassal, in name of Heriot, or Herezeld.

To Gilbert the Galliard thus he said :
"Know thou me for thy liege-lord and head ;
Deal not with me as with Morton tame,
For Scotts play best at the roughest game.
Give me in peace my heriot due,
Thy bonny white steed, or thou shalt rue.
If my horn I three times wind,
Eskdale shall long have the sound in mind."—

XII

Loudly the Beattison laugh'd in scorn ;
"Little care we for thy winded horn.
Ne'er shall it be the Galliard's lot,
To yield his steed to a haughty Scott.
Wend thou to Branksome back on foot,
With rusty spur and miry boot."—
He blew his bugle so loud and hoarse,
That the dun-deer started at fair Craikcross ;
He blew again so loud and clear,
Through the grey mountain-mist there did lances
appear ;
And the third blast rang with such a din,
That the echoes answer'd from Pentoun-linn,
And all his riders came lightly in.
Then had you seen a gallant shock,
When saddles were emptied, and lances broke !
For each scornful word the Galliard had said,
A Beattison on the field was laid.
His own good sword the chieftain drew,
And he bore the Galliard through and through ;
Where the Beattisons' blood mix'd with the rill,
The Galliard's-Haugh men call it still.
The Scotts have scatter'd the Beattison clan,
In Eskdale they left but one landed man.
The valley of Eske, from the mouth to the source,
Was lost and won for that bonny white horse.

XIII

Whitslade the Hawk, and Headshaw came,
And warriors more than I may name ;
From Yarrow-cleugh to Hindhaugh-swair,
From Woodhouselee to Chester-glen,

Troop'd man and horse, and bow and spear;
Their gathering word was Bellenden.[1]
And better hearts o'er Border sod
To siege or rescue never rode.
The Ladye mark'd the aids come in,
And high her heart of pride arose:
She bade her youthful son attend,
That he might know his father's friend,
And learn to face his foes.
"The boy is ripe to look on war;
I saw him draw a cross-bow stiff,
And his true arrow struck afar
The raven's nest upon the cliff;
The red cross, on a southern breast,
Is broader than the raven's nest,
Thou, Whitslade, shalt teach him his weapon to wield,
And o'er him hold his father's shield."—

XIV

Well may you think, the wily page
Cared not to face the Ladye sage.
He counterfeited childish fear,
And shriek'd, and shed full many a tear,
And moan'd and plain'd in manner wild.
The attendants to the Ladye told,
Some fairy, sure, had changed the child,
That wont to be so free and bold.
Then wrathful was the noble dame;
She blush'd blood-red for very shame:—
"Hence! ere the clan his faintness view;
Hence with the weakling to Buccleuch!—
Watt Tinlinn, thou shalt be his guide
To Rangleburn's lonely side.—
Sure some fell fiend has cursed our line,
That coward should e'er be son of mine!"—

XV

A heavy task Watt Tinlinn had,
To guide the counterfeited lad.

[1] Bellenden, near the head of the Borthwick water, being in the centre of the territory of the Scotts, was often used as a place of rendezvous.

Soon as the palfrey felt the weight
Of that ill-omen'd elfish freight,
He bolted, sprung, and rear'd amain,
Nor heeded bit, nor curb, nor rein.
It cost Watt Tinlinn mickle toil
To drive him but a Scottish mile;
But as a shallow brook they cross'd,
The elf, amid the running stream,
His figure changed, like form in dream,
And fled, and shouted, "Lost! lost! lost!"
Full fast the urchin ran and laugh'd,
But faster still a cloth-yard shaft
Whistled from startled Tinlinn's yew,
And pierced his shoulder through and through.
Although the imp might not be slain,
And though the wound soon heal'd again,
Yet, as he ran, he yell'd for pain;
And Watt of Tinlinn, much aghast,
Rode back to Branksome fiery fast.

XVI

Soon on the hill's steep verge he stood,
That looks o'er Branksome's towers and wood;
And martial murmurs, from below,
Proclaim'd the approaching southern foe.
Through the dark wood, in mingled tone,
Were Border pipes and bugles blown;
The coursers' neighing he could ken,
A measured tread of marching men;
While broke at times the solemn hum,
The Almayn's sullen kettle-drum;
And banners tall, of crimson sheen,
Above the copse appear;
And, glistening through the hawthorns green,
Shine helm, and shield, and spear.

XVII

Light forayers, first, to view the ground,
Spurr'd their fleet coursers loosely round;
Behind, in close array, and fast,
The Kendal archers, all in green,

Obedient to the bugle blast,
Advancing from the wood were seen.
To back and guard the archer band,
Lord Dacre's bill-men were at hand :
A hardy race, on Irthing bred,
With kirtles white, and crosses red,
Array'd beneath the banner tall,
That stream'd o'er Acre's conquer'd wall ;
And minstrels, as they march'd in order,
Play'd, "Noble Lord Dacre, he dwells on the Border."

XVIII

Behind the English bill and bow,
The mercenaries, firm and slow,
Moved on to fight, in dark array,
By Conrad led of Wolfenstein,
Who brought the band from distant Rhine,
And sold their blood for foreign pay.
The camp their home, their law the sword,
They knew no country, own'd no lord :
They were not arm'd like England's sons,
But bore the levin-darting guns ;
Buff coats, all frounced and 'broider'd o'er,
And morsing-horns [1] and scarfs they wore ;
Each better knee was bared, to aid
The warriors in the escalade ;
All, as they march'd, in rugged tongue,
Songs of Teutonic feuds they sung.

XIX

But louder still the clamour grew,
And louder still the minstrels blew,
When, from beneath the greenwood tree,
Rode forth Lord Howard's chivalry ;
His men-at-arms, with glaive and spear,
Brought up the battle's glittering rear.
There many a youthful knight, full keen
To gain his spurs, in arms was seen ;
With favour in his crest, or glove,
Memorial of his ladye-love.

[1] Powder-flasks.

So rode they forth in fair array,
Till full their lengthen'd lines display;
Then call'd a halt, and made a stand,
And cried, "St. George, for merry England!"

XX

Now every English eye, intent
On Branksome's armed towers was bent;
So near they were, that they might know
The straining harsh of each cross-bow;
On battlement and bartizan
Gleam'd axe, and spear, and partisan;
Falcon and culver,[1] on each tower,
Stood prompt their deadly hail to shower;
And flashing armour frequent broke
From eddying whirls of sable smoke,
Where upon tower and turret head,
The seething pitch and molten lead
Reek'd, like a witch's cauldron red.
While yet they gaze, the bridges fall,
The wicket opes, and from the wall
Rides forth the hoary Seneschal.

XXI

Armed he rode, all save the head,
His white beard o'er his breast-plate spread;
Unbroke by age, erect his seat,
He ruled his eager courser's gait;
Forced him, with chasten'd fire, to prance,
And, high curvetting, slow advance:
In sign of truce, his better hand
Display'd a peeled willow wand;
His squire, attending in the rear,
Bore high a gauntlet on a spear.[2]
When they espied him riding out,
Lord Howard and Lord Dacre stout
Sped to the front of their array,
To hear what this old knight should say.

1 Ancient pieces of artillery.

2 A glove upon a lance was the emblem of faith among the ancient Borderers, who were wont, when any one broke his word, to expose this emblem, and proclaim him a faithless villain at the first Border meeting. This ceremony was much dreaded.

XXII

"Ye English warden lords, of you
Demands the Ladye of Buccleuch,
Why, 'gainst the truce of Border tide,
In hostile guise ye dare to ride,
With Kendal bow, and Gilsland brand,
And all yon mercenary band,
Upon the bounds of fair Scotland?
My Ladye reads you swith return;
And, if but one poor straw you burn,
Or do our towers so much molest,
As scare one swallow from her nest,
St. Mary! but we'll light a brand
Shall warm your hearths in Cumberland."

XXIII

A wrathful man was Dacre's lord,
But calmer Howard took the word:
"May't please thy Dame, Sir Seneschal,
To seek the castle's outward wall,
Our pursuivant-at-arms shall show
Both why we came, and when we go."—
The message sped, the noble Dame
To the wall's outward circle came;
Each chief around lean'd on his spear,
To see the pursuivant appear.
All in Lord Howard's livery dress'd,
The lion argent deck'd his breast;
He led a boy of blooming hue—
O sight to meet a mother's view!
It was the heir of great Buccleuch.
Obeisance meet the herald made,
And thus his master's will he said:—

XXIV

"It irks, high Dame, my noble Lords,
'Gainst ladye fair to draw their swords;
But yet they may not tamely see,
All through the Western Wardenry,
Your law-contemning kinsmen ride,
And burn and spoil the Border-side;

And ill beseems your rank and birth
To make your towers a flemens-firth.[1]
We claim from thee William of Deloraine,
That he may suffer march-treason[2] pain.
It was but last St. Cuthbert's even
He prick'd to Stapleton on Leven,
Harried[3] the lands of Richard Musgrave,
And slew his brother by dint of glaive.
Then, since a lone and widow'd Dame
These restless riders may not tame,
Either receive within thy towers
Two hundred of my master's powers,
Or straight they sound their warrison,[4]
And storm and spoil thy garrison:
And this fair boy, to London led,
Shall good King Edward's page be bred."

XXV

He ceased—and loud the boy did cry,
And stretch'd his little arms on high;
Implored for aid each well-known face,
And strove to seek the Dame's embrace.
A moment changed that Ladye's cheer,
Gush'd to her eye the unbidden tear;
She gazed upon the leaders round,
And dark and sad each warrior frown'd;
Then, deep within her sobbing breast
She lock'd the struggling sigh to rest;
Unalter'd and collected stood,
And thus replied, in dauntless mood:—

XXVI

"Say to your Lords of high emprize,
Who war on women and on boys,
That either William of Deloraine
Will cleanse him, by oath, of march-treason stain,
Or else he will the combat take
'Gainst Musgrave, for his honour's sake.

1 An asylum for outlaws.

2 The penalty for breach of the laws of the Marches or Borders. Various offences peculiar to the Borders, such as plundering from the opposite side in times of truce, constituted march-treason.

3 Plundered. 4 Note of assault.

No knight in Cumberland so good,
But William may count with him kin and blood.
Knighthood he took of Douglas' sword,
When English blood swell'd Ancram's ford;[1]
And, but Lord Dacre's steed was wight,
And bare him ably in the flight,
Himself had seen him dubb'd a knight.
For the young heir of Branksome's line,
God be his aid, and God be mine;
Through me no friend shall meet his doom;
Here, while I live, no foe finds room.
Then, if thy Lords their purpose urge,
Take our defiance loud and high;
Our slogan is their lyke-wake dirge,[2]
Our moat, the grave where they shall lie."

XXVII

Proud she look'd round, applause to claim—
Then lighten'd Thirlestane's eye of flame;
His bugle Wat of Harden blew;
Pensils and pennons wide were flung,
To heaven the Border slogan rung,
"St. Mary for the young Buccleuch!"
The English war-cry answer'd wide,
And forward bent each southern spear;
Each Kendal archer made a stride,
And drew the bowstring to his ear;
Each minstrel's war-note loud was blown;—
But, ere a grey-goose shaft had flown,
A horseman gallop'd from the rear.

XXVIII

"Ah! noble Lords!" he breathless said,
"What treason has your march betray'd?
What make you here, from aid so far,
Before you walls, around you war?
Your foemen triumph in the thought,
That in the toils the lion's caught.
Already on dark Ruberslaw
The Douglas holds his weapon-schaw;[3]

[1] See Scott's ballad of *The Eve of St. John*, p. 27.
[2] *Lyke-wake*, the watching a corpse previous to interment.
[3] *Weapon-schaw*, the military array of a county.

The lances, waving in his train,
Clothe the dun heath like autumn grain;
And on the Liddel's northern strand,
To bar retreat to Cumberland,
Lord Maxwell ranks his merry-men good,
Beneath the eagle and the rood;
And Jedwood, Eske, and Teviotdale,
Have to proud Angus come;
And all the Merse and Lauderdale
Have risen with haughty Home.
An exile from Northumberland,
In Liddesdale I've wander'd long;
But still my heart was with merry England,
And cannot brook my country's wrong;
And hard I've spurr'd all night to show
The mustering of the coming foe."—

XXIX

"And let them come!" fierce Dacre cried;
"For soon yon crest, my father's pride,
That swept the shores of Judah's sea,
And waved in gales of Galilee,
From Branksome's highest towers display'd,
Shall mock the rescue's lingering aid!—
Level each harquebuss on row;
Draw, merry archers, draw the bow;
Up, bill-men, to the walls, and cry,
Dacre for England, win or die!"—

XXX

"Yet hear," quoth Howard, "calmly hear,
Nor deem my words the words of fear:
For who, in field or foray slack,
Saw the blanche lion e'er fall back?[1]
But thus to risk our Border flower
In strife against a kingdom's power,
Ten thousand Scots 'gainst thousands three,
Certes, were desperate policy.
Nay, take the terms the Ladye made,
Ere conscious of the advancing aid:

1 A white lion was the cognisance of the house of Howard.

Let Musgrave meet fierce Deloraine
In single fight; and, if he gain,
He gains for us; but if he's cross'd,
'Tis but a single warrior lost:
The rest, retreating as they came,
Avoid defeat, and death, and shame."

XXXI

Ill could the haughty Dacre brook
His brother Warden's sage rebuke;
And yet his forward step he staid,
And slow and sullenly obey'd.
But ne'er again the Border side
Did these two lords in friendship ride;
And this slight discontent, men say,
Cost blood upon another day.

XXXII

The pursuivant-at-arms again
Before the castle took his stand;
His trumpet call'd, with parleying strain,
The leaders of the Scottish band;
And he defied, in Musgrave's right,
Stout Deloraine to single fight;
A gauntlet at their feet he laid,
And thus the terms of fight he said:—
"If in the lists good Musgrave's sword
Vanquish the Knight of Deloraine,
Your youthful chieftain, Branksome's Lord,
Shall hostage for his clan remain:
If Deloraine foil good Musgrave,
The boy his liberty shall have.
Howe'er it falls, the English band,
Unharming Scots, by Scots unharm'd,
In peaceful march, like men unarm'd,
Shall straight retreat to Cumberland."

XXXIII

Unconscious of the near relief,
The proffer pleased each Scottish chief,
Though much the Ladye sage gainsay'd;

For though their hearts were brave and true,
From Jedwood's recent sack they knew,
How tardy was the Regent's aid:
And you may guess the noble Dame
Durst not the secret prescience own,
Sprung from the art she might not name,
By which the coming help was known.
Closed was the compact, and agreed
That lists should be enclosed with speed,
Beneath the castle, on a lawn:
They fix'd the morrow for the strife,
On foot, with Scottish axe and knife,
At the fourth hour from peep of dawn;
When Deloraine, from sickness freed,
Or else a champion in his stead,
Should for himself and chieftain stand,
Against stout Musgrave, hand to hand.

XXXIV

I know right well, that, in their lay,
Full many minstrels sing and say,
Such combat should be made on horse,
On foaming steed, in full career,
With brand to aid, when as the spear
Should shiver in the course:
But he, the jovial Harper,* taught
Me, yet a youth, how it was fought,
In guise which now I say;
He knew each ordinance and clause
Of Black Lord Archibald's battle-laws,
In the old Douglas' day.
He brook'd not, he, that scoffing tongue
Should tax his minstrelsy with wrong,
Or call his song untrue:
For this, when they the goblet plied,
And such rude taunt had chafed his pride,
The Bard of Reull he slew.
On Teviot's side, in fight they stood,
And tuneful hands were stain'd with blood;
Where still the thorn's white branches wave,
Memorial o'er his rival's grave.

XXXV

Why should I tell the rigid doom,
That dragg'd my master to his tomb;
How Ousenam's maidens tore their hair,
Wept till their eyes were dead and dim,
And wrung their hands for love of him,
Who died at Jedwood Air?
He died!—his scholars, one by one,
To the cold silent grave are gone;
And I, alas! survive alone,
To muse o'er rivalries of yore,
And grieve that I shall hear no more
The strains, with envy heard before;
For, with my minstrel brethren fled,
My jealousy of song is dead.

---

He paused: the listening dames again
Applaud the hoary Minstrel's strain.
With many a word of kindly cheer,—
In pity half, and half sincere,—
Marvell'd the Duchess how so well
His legendary song could tell—
Of ancient deeds, so long forgot;
Of feuds, whose memory was not;
Of forests, now laid waste and bare;
Of towers, which harbour now the hare;
Of manners, long since changed and gone;
Of chiefs, who under their grey stone
So long had slept, that fickle Fame
Had blotted from her rolls their name,
And twined round some new minion's head
The fading wreath for which they bled;
In sooth, 'twas strange, this old man's verse
Could call them from their marble hearse.

The Harper smiled, well pleased; for ne'er
Was flattery lost on poet's ear:
A simple race! they waste their toil
For the vain tribute of a smile;
E'en when in age their flame expires,
Her dulcet breath can fan its fires:

Their drooping fancy wakes at praise,
And strives to trim the short-lived blaze.

Smiled, then, well pleased, the Aged Man,
And thus his tale continued ran.

## CANTO FIFTH

I

Call it not vain:—they do not err,
Who say, that when the Poet dies,
Mute Nature mourns her worshipper,
And celebrates his obsequies:
Who say, tall cliff, and cavern lone,
For the departed Bard make moan;
That mountains weep in crystal rill;
That flowers in tears of balm distil;
Through his loved groves that breezes sigh,
And oaks, in deeper groan, reply;
And rivers teach their rushing wave
To murmur dirges round his grave.

II

Not that, in sooth, o'er mortal urn
Those things inanimate can mourn;
But that the stream, the wood, the gale,
Is vocal with the plaintive wail
Of those, who, else forgotten long,
Lived in the poet's faithful song,
And, with the poet's parting breath,
Whose memory feels a second death.
The Maid's pale shade, who wails her lot,
That love, true love, should be forgot,
From rose and hawthorn shakes the tear
Upon the gentle Minstrel's bier:
The phantom Knight, his glory fled,
Mourns o'er the field he heap'd with dead;
Mounts the wild blast that sweeps amain,
And shrieks along the battle-plain.

The chief, whose antique crownlet long
Still sparkled in the feudal song,
Now, from the mountain's misty throne,
Sees, in the thanedom once his own,
His ashes undistinguish'd lie,
His place, his power, his memory die:
His groans the lonely caverns fill,
His tears of rage impel the rill:
All mourn the Minstrel's harp unstrung,
Their name unknown, their praise unsung.

III

Scarcely the hot assault was staid,
The terms of truce were scarcely made,
When they could spy, from Branksome's towers,
The advancing march of martial powers.
Thick clouds of dust afar appear'd,
And trampling steeds were faintly heard;
Bright spears, above the columns dun,
Glanced momentary to the sun;
And feudal banners fair display'd
The bands that moved to Branksome's aid.

IV

Vails not to tell each hardy clan,
From the fair Middle Marches came;
The Bloody Heart blazed in the van,
Announcing Douglas, dreaded name![1]
Vails not to tell what steeds did spurn,
Where the Seven Spears of Wedderburne
Their men in battle-order set;
And Swinton laid the lance in rest,*
That tamed of yore the sparkling crest
Of Clarence's Plantagenet.
Nor list I say what hundreds more,
From the rich Merse and Lammermore,
And Tweed's fair borders, to the war,
Beneath the crest of Old Dunbar,
And Hepburn's mingled banners come,

[1] A red heart was assumed as the cognisance of the house of Douglas, in allusion to the commission of Lord James Douglas, who was charged by Bruce to carry his heart to the Holy Land.

Down the steep mountain glittering far,
And shouting still, "A Home! a Home!"

V

Now squire and knight, from Branksome sent,
On many a courteous message went;
To every chief and lord they paid
Meet thanks for prompt and powerful aid;
And told them,—how a truce was made,
And how a day of fight was ta'en
'Twixt Musgrave and stout Deloraine;
And how the Ladye pray'd them dear,
That all would stay the fight to see,
And deign, in love and courtesy,
To taste of Branksome cheer.
Nor, while they bade to feast each Scot,
Were England's noble Lords forgot.
Himself, the hoary Seneschal
Rode forth, in seemly terms to call
Those gallant foes to Branksome-Hall.
Accepted Howard, than whom knight
Was never dubb'd, more bold in fight;
Nor, when from war and armour free,
More famed for stately courtesy:
But angry Dacre rather chose
In his pavilion to repose.

VI

Now, noble Dame, perchance you ask,
How these two hostile armies met?
Deeming it were no easy task
To keep the truce which here was set;
Where martial spirits, all on fire,
Breathed only blood and mortal ire.—
By mutual inroads, mutual blows,
By habit, and by nation, foes,
They met on Teviot's strand;
They met and sate them mingled down,
Without a threat, without a frown,
As brothers meet in foreign land:

The hands, the spear that lately grasp'd,
Still in the mailed gauntlet clasp'd,
Were interchanged in greeting dear;
Visors were raised, and faces shown,
And many a friend, to friend made known,
Partook of social cheer.
Some drove the jolly bowl about;
With dice and draughts some chased the day;
And some, with many a merry shout,
In riot, revelry, and rout,
Pursued the foot-ball play.

VII

Yet, be it known, had bugles blown,
Or sign of war been seen,
Those bands, so fair together ranged,
Those hands, so frankly interchanged,
Had dyed with gore the green:
The merry shout by Teviot-side
Had sunk in war-cries wild and wide,
And in the groan of death;
And whingers,[1] now in friendship bare,
The social meal to part and share,
Had found a bloody sheath.
'Twixt truce and war, such sudden change
Was not infrequent, nor held strange,
In the old Border-day:
But yet on Branksome's towers and town,
In peaceful merriment, sunk down
The sun's declining ray.

VIII

The blithesome signs of wassel gay
Decay'd not with the dying day;
Soon through the latticed windows tall
Of lofty Branksome's lordly hall,
Divided square by shafts of stone,
Huge flakes of ruddy lustre shone;
Nor less the gilded rafters rang
With merry harp and beakers' clang:

[1] A sort of knife or poniard.

And frequent, on the darkening plain,
Loud hollo, whoop, or whistle ran,
As bands, their stragglers to regain,
Give the shrill watchword of their clan;
And revellers, o'er their bowls, proclaim
Douglas' or Dacre's conquering name.

IX

Less frequent heard, and fainter still,
At length the various clamours died:
And you might hear, from Branksome hill,
No sound but Teviot's rushing tide;
Save when the changing sentinel
The challenge of his watch could tell;
And save, where, through the dark profound,
The clanging axe and hammer's sound
Rung from the nether lawn;
For many a busy hand toil'd there,
Strong pales to shape, and beams to square,
The lists' dread barriers to prepare
Against the morrow's dawn.

X

Margaret from hall did soon retreat,
Despite the Dame's reproving eye;
Nor mark'd she, as she left her seat,
Full many a stifled sigh;
For many a noble warrior strove
To win the Flower of Teviot's love,
And many a bold ally.—
With throbbing head and anxious heart,
All in her lonely bower apart,
In broken sleep she lay:
By times, from silken couch she rose;
While yet the banner'd hosts repose,
She view'd the dawning day:
Of all the hundreds sunk to rest
First woke the loveliest and the best.

XI

She gazed upon the inner court,
Which in the tower's tall shadow lay;

Where coursers' clang, and stamp, and snort,
Had rung the livelong yesterday;
Now, still as death; till stalking slow,—
The jingling spurs announced his tread,—
A stately warrior pass'd below;
But when he raised his plumed head—
Blessed Mary! can it be?—
Secure, as if in Ousenam bowers,
He walks through Branksome's hostile towers,
With fearless step and free.
She dared not sign, she dared not speak—
Oh! if one page's slumbers break,
His blood the price must pay!
Not all the pearls Queen Mary wears,
Not Margaret's yet more precious tears,
Shall buy his life a day.

XII

Yet was his hazard small; for well
You may bethink you of the spell
Of that sly urchin page;
This to his lord he did impart,
And made him seem, by glamour art,
A knight from Hermitage.
Unchallenged thus, the warder's post,
The court, unchallenged, thus he cross'd,
For all the vassalage:
But O! what magic's quaint disguise
Could blind fair Margaret's azure eyes!
She started from her seat;
While with surprise and fear she strove,
And both could scarcely master love—
Lord Henry's at her feet.

XIII

Oft have I mused, what purpose bad
That foul malicious urchin had
To bring this meeting round;
For happy love's a heavenly sight,
And by a vile malignant sprite
In such no joy is found;

And oft I've deem'd, perchance he thought
Their erring passion might have wrought
Sorrow, and sin, and shame;
And death to Cranstoun's gallant Knight,
And to the gentle ladye bright,
Disgrace, and loss of fame.
But earthly spirit could not tell
The heart of them that loved so well.
True love's the gift which God has given
To man alone beneath the heaven:
It is not fantasy's hot fire,
Whose wishes, soon as granted, fly;
It liveth not in fierce desire,
With dead desire it doth not die;
It is the secret sympathy,
The silver link, the silken tie,
Which heart to heart, and mind to mind,
In body and in soul can bind.—
Now leave we Margaret and her Knight,
To tell you of the approaching fight.

XIV

Their warning blasts the bugles blew,
The pipe's shrill port[1] aroused each clan;
In haste, the deadly strife to view,
The trooping warriors eager ran:
Thick round the lists their lances stood,
Like blasted pines in Ettrick Wood;
To Branksome many a look they threw,
The combatants' approach to view,
And bandied many a word of boast,
About the knight each favour'd most.

XV

Meantime full anxious was the Dame;
For now arose disputed claim,
Of who should fight for Deloraine,
'Twixt Harden and 'twixt Thirlestaine:
They 'gan to reckon kin and rent,
And frowning brow on brow was bent;

[1] A martial piece of music, adapted to the bagpipes.

But yet not long the strife—for, lo!
Himself, the knight of Deloraine,
Strong, as it seem'd, and free from pain,
In armour sheath'd from top to toe,
Appear'd, and craved the combat due.
The Dame her charm successful knew,
And the fierce chiefs their claims withdrew.

XVI

When for the lists they sought the plain,
The stately Ladye's silken rein
Did noble Howard hold;
Unarmed by her side he walk'd,
And much, in courteous phrase, they talk'd
Of feats of arms of old.
Costly his garb—his Flemish ruff
Fell o'er his doublet, shaped of buff,
With satin slash'd and lined;
Tawny his boot, and gold his spur,
His cloak was all of Poland fur,
His hose with silver twined;
His Bilboa blade, by Marchmen felt,
Hung in a broad and studded belt;
Hence, in rude phrase, the Borderers still
Call'd noble Howard, Belted Will.

XVII

Behind Lord Howard and the Dame,
Fair Margaret on her palfrey came,
Whose foot-cloth swept the ground:
White was her wimple, and her veil,
And her loose locks a chaplet pale
Of whitest roses bound;
The lordly Angus, by her side,
In courtesy to cheer her tried;
Without his aid, her hand in vain
Had strove to guide her broider'd rein.
He deem'd, she shudder'd at the sight
Of warriors met for mortal fight;
But cause of terror, all unguess'd,
Was fluttering in her gentle breast,

When, in their chairs of crimson placed,
The Dame and she the barriers graced.

XVIII

Prize of the field, the young Buccleuch,
An English knight led forth to view;
Scarce rued the boy his present plight,
So much he long'd to see the fight.
Within the lists, in knightly pride,
High Home and haughty Dacre ride;
Their leading staffs of steel they wield,
As marshals of the mortal field;
While to each knight their care assign'd
Like vantage of the sun and wind.
Then heralds hoarse did loud proclaim,
In King and Queen, and Warden's name,
That none, while lasts the strife,
Should dare, by look, or sign, or word,
Aid to a champion to afford,
On peril of his life;
And not a breath the silence broke,
Till thus the alternate Heralds spoke:—

XIX

ENGLISH HERALD

"Here standeth Richard of Musgrave,
Good knight and true, and freely born,
Amends from Deloraine to crave,
For foul despiteous scathe and scorn.
He sayeth, that William of Deloraine
Is traitor false by Border laws;
This with his sword he will maintain,
So help him God, and his good cause!"

XX

SCOTTISH HERALD

"Here standeth William of Deloraine,
Good knight and true, of noble strain,
Who sayeth, that foul treason's stain,

Since he bore arms, ne'er soil'd his coat:
And that, so help him God above!
He will on Musgrave's body prove,
He lies most foully in his throat."

LORD DACRE

"Forward, brave champions, to the fight!
Sound trumpets!"——

LORD HOME

——"God defend the right!"—
Then, Teviot! how thine echoes rang,
When bugle-sound and trumpet-clang
Let loose the martial foes,
And in mid list, with shield poised high,
And measured step and wary eye,
The combatants did close.

XXI

Ill would it suit your gentle ear,
Ye lovely listeners, to hear
How to the axe the helms did sound,
And blood pour'd down from many a wound;
For desperate was the strife and long,
And either warrior fierce and strong.
But, were each dame a listening knight,
I well could tell how warriors fight!
For I have seen war's lightning flashing,
Seen the claymore with bayonet clashing,
Seen through red blood the war-horse dashing,
And scorn'd, amid the reeling strife,
To yield a step for death or life.—

XXII

'Tis done, 'tis done! that fatal blow
Has stretch'd him on the bloody plain:
He strives to rise—Brave Musgrave, no!
Thence never shalt thou rise again!
He chokes in blood—some friendly hand
Undo the visor's barred band,
Unfix the gorget's iron clasp,
And give him room for life to gasp!—

O, bootless aid!—haste, holy Friar,
Haste, ere the sinner shall expire!
Of all his guilt let him be shriven,
And smooth his path from earth to heaven!

XXIII

In haste the holy Friar sped;—
His naked foot was dyed with red,
As through the lists he ran;
Unmindful of the shouts on high,
That hail'd the conqueror's victory,
He raised the dying man;
Loose waved his silver beard and hair,
As o'er him he kneel'd down in prayer;
And still the crucifix on high
He holds before his darkening eye;
And still he bends an anxious ear,
His faltering penitence to hear;
Still props him from the bloody sod,
Still, even when soul and body part,
Pours ghostly comfort on his heart,
And bids him trust in God!
Unheard he prays;—the death-pang's o'er!
Richard of Musgrave breathes no more.

XXIV

As if exhausted in the fight,
Or musing o'er the piteous sight,
The silent victor stands;
His beaver did he not unclasp,
Mark'd not the shouts, felt not the grasp
Of gratulating hands.
When lo! strange cries of wild surprise,
Mingled with seeming terror, rise
Among the Scottish bands;
And all, amid the throng'd array,
In panic haste gave open way
To a half-naked ghastly man,
Who downward from the castle ran:
He cross'd the barriers at a bound,
And wild and haggard look'd around,

As dizzy, and in pain;
And all, upon the armed ground,
Knew William of Deloraine!
Each ladye sprung from seat with speed;
Vaulted each marshal from his steed;
"And who art thou," they cried,
"Who hast this battle fought and won?"—
His plumed helm was soon undone—
"Cranstoun of Teviot-side!
For this fair prize I've fought and won,"—
And to the Ladye led her son.

XXV

Full oft the rescued boy she kiss'd,
And often press'd him to her breast;
For, under all her dauntless show,
Her heart had throbb'd at every blow;
Yet not Lord Cranstoun deign'd she greet,
Though low he kneeled at her feet.
Me lists not tell what words were made,
What Douglas, Home, and Howard, said—
—For Howard was a generous foe—
And how the clan united pray'd
The Ladye would the feud forego,
And deign to bless the nuptial hour
Of Cranstoun's Lord and Teviot's Flower.

XXVI

She look'd to river, look'd to hill,
Thought on the Spirit's prophecy,
Then broke her silence stern and still,—
"Not you, but Fate, has vanquish'd me;
Their influence kindly stars may shower
On Teviot's tide and Branksome's tower,
For pride is quell'd, and love is free."—
She took fair Margaret by the hand,
Who, breathless, trembling, scarce might stand;
That hand to Cranstoun's lord gave she:—
"As I am true to thee and thine,
Do thou be true to me and mine!
This clasp of love our bond shall be;
For this is your betrothing day,

And all these noble lords shall stay,
To grace it with their company."—

XXVII

All as they left the listed plain,
Much of the story she did gain;
How Cranstoun fought with Deloraine,
And of his page, and of the Book
Which from the wounded knight he took;
And how he sought her castle high,
That morn, by help of gramarye;
How, in Sir William's armour dight,
Stolen by his page, while slept the knight,
He took on him the single fight.
But half his tale he left unsaid,
And linger'd till he join'd the maid.—
Cared not the Ladye to betray
Her mystic arts in view of day;
But well she thought, ere midnight came,
Of that strange page the pride to tame,
From his foul hands the Book to save,
And send it back to Michael's grave.—
Needs not to tell each tender word
'Twixt Margaret and 'twixt Cranstoun's lord;
Nor how she told of former woes,
And how her bosom fell and rose,
While he and Musgrave bandied blows.—
Needs not these lovers' joys to tell:
One day, fair maids, you'll know them well.

XXVIII

William of Deloraine, some chance
Had waken'd from his deathlike trance;
And taught that, in the listed plain,
Another, in his arms and shield,
Against fierce Musgrave axe did wield,
Under the name of Deloraine.
Hence, to the field, unarm'd, he ran,
And hence his presence scared the clan,
Who held him for some fleeting wraith,[1]
And not a man of blood and breath.

[1] The spectral apparition of a living person.

Not much this new ally he loved,
Yet, when he saw what hap had proved,
He greeted him right heartily:
He would not waken old debate,
For he was void of rancorous hate,
Though rude, and scant of courtesy;
In raids he spilt but seldom blood,
Unless when men-at-arms withstood,
Or, as was meet, for deadly feud.
He ne'er bore grudge for stalwart blow,
Ta'en in fair fight from gallant foe:
And so 'twas seen of him, e'en now,
When on dead Musgrave he look'd down;
Grief darken'd on his rugged brow,
Though half disguised with a frown;
And thus, while sorrow bent his head,
His foeman's epitaph he made:—

XXIX

"Now, Richard Musgrave, liest thou here!
I ween, my deadly enemy;
For, if I slew thy brother dear,
Thou slew'st a sister's son to me;
And when I lay in dungeon dark,
Of Naworth Castle, long months three,
Till ransom'd for a thousand mark,
Dark Musgrave, it was long of thee.
And, Musgrave, could our fight be tried,
And thou wert now alive, as I,
No mortal man should us divide,
Till one, or both of us, did die:
Yet rest thee God! for well I know
I ne'er shall find a nobler foe.
In all the northern counties here,
Whose word is Snaffle, spur, and spear,
Thou wert the best to follow gear!
'Twas pleasure, as we look'd behind,
To see how thou the chase could'st wind,
Cheer the dark blood-hound on his way,
And with the bugle rouse the fray!
I'd give the lands of Deloraine,
Dark Musgrave were alive again."—

XXX

So mourn'd he, till Lord Dacre's band
Were bowning back to Cumberland.
They raised brave Musgrave from the field,
And laid him on his bloody shield;
On levell'd lances, four and four,
By turns, the noble burden bore.
Before, at times, upon the gale,
Was heard the Minstrel's plaintive wail;
Behind, four priests, in sable stole,
Sung requiem for the warrior's soul:
Around, the horsemen slowly rode;
With trailing pikes the spearmen trode;
And thus the gallant knight they bore,
Through Liddesdale to Leven's shore;
Thence to Holme Coltrame's lofty nave,
And laid him in his father's grave.

---

The harp's wild notes, though hush'd the song,
The mimic march of death prolong;
Now seems it far, and now a-near,
Now meets, and now eludes the ear;
Now seems some mountain side to sweep,
Now faintly dies in valley deep;
Seems now as if the Minstrel's wail,
Now the sad requiem, loads the gale;
Last, o'er the warrior's closing grave,
Rung the full choir in choral stave.

After due pause, they bade him tell,
Why he, who touch'd the harp so well,
Should thus, with ill-rewarded toil,
Wander a poor and thankless soil,
When the more generous Southern Land
Would well requite his skilful hand.

The Aged Harper, howsoe'er
His only friend, his harp, was dear,
Liked not to hear it rank'd so high
Above his flowing poesy:

Less liked he still, that scornful jeer
Misprised the land he loved so dear;
High was the sound, as thus again
The Bard resumed his minstrel strain.

## CANTO SIXTH

I

Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd,
As home his footsteps he hath turn'd,
From wandering on a foreign strand!
If such there breathe, go, mark him well;
For him no Minstrel raptures swell;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentred all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonour'd, and unsung.

II

O Caledonia! stern and wild,
Meet nurse for a poetic child!
Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood,
Land of my sires! what mortal hand
Can e'er untie the filial band,
That knits me to thy rugged strand!
Still, as I view each well-known scene,
Think what is now, and what hath been,
Seems as, to me, of all bereft,
Sole friends thy woods and streams were left;
And thus I love them better still,
Even in extremity of ill.

By Yarrow's streams still let me stray,
Though none should guide my feeble way;
Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break,
Although it chill my wither'd cheek;[1]
Still lay my head by Teviot Stone,
Though there, forgotten and alone,
The Bard may draw his parting groan.

III

Not scorn'd like me! to Branksome-Hall
The Minstrels came, at festive call;
Trooping they came, from near and far,
The jovial priests of mirth and war;
Alike for feast and fight prepared,
Battle and banquet both they shared.
Of late, before each martial clan,
They blew their death-note in the van,
But now, for every merry mate,
Rose the portcullis' iron grate;
They sound the pipe, they strike the string,
They dance, they revel, and they sing,
Till the rude turrets shake and ring.

IV

Me lists not at this tide declare
The splendour of the spousal rite,
How muster'd in the chapel fair
Both maid and matron, squire and knight;
Me lists not tell of owches rare,
Of mantles green, and braided hair,
And kirtles furr'd with miniver;
What plumage waved the altar round,
How spurs and ringing chainlets sound:
And hard it were for bard to speak
The changeful hue of Margaret's cheek;
That lovely hue which comes and flies,
As awe and shame alternate rise!

V

Some bards have sung, the Ladye high
Chapel or altar came not nigh;

[1] The preceding four lines now form the inscription on the monument of Sir Walter Scott in the market-place of Selkirk.

Nor durst the rites of spousal grace,
So much she fear'd each holy place.
False slanders these:—I trust right well
She wrought not by forbidden spell;[1]
For mighty words and signs have power
O'er sprites in planetary hour:
Yet scarce I praise their venturous part,
Who tamper with such dangerous art.
But this for faithful truth I say,
The Ladye by the altar stood,
Of sable velvet her array,
And on her head a crimson hood,
With pearls embroider'd and entwined,
Guarded with gold, with ermine lined;
A merlin sat upon her wrist,[2]
Held by a leash of silken twist.

VI

The spousal rites were ended soon:
'Twas now the merry hour of noon,
And in the lofty arched hall
Was spread the gorgeous festival.
Steward and squire, with heedful haste,
Marshall'd the rank of every guest;
Pages, with ready blade, were there,
The mighty meal to carve and share:
O'er capon, heron-shew, and crane,
And princely peacock's gilded train,[3]
And o'er the boar-head, garnish'd brave,
And cygnet from St. Mary's wave;
O'er ptarmigan and venison,
The priest had spoke his benison.

[1] Popular belief, though contrary to the doctrines of the Church, made a favourable distinction betwixt magicians and necromancers or wizards; the former were supposed to command the evil spirits, and the latter to serve, or at least to be in league and compact with, those enemies of mankind.

[2] The merlin was carried by ladies of rank as falcons were carried by knights or barons.

[3] The peacock was not only esteemed a delicacy as food, but a dish of peculiar solemnity, the bringing in of which, decorated with the plumage of the bird, was the signal for vows of adventure to be taken "before the peacock and the ladies."

Then rose the riot and the din,
Above, beneath, without, within!
For, from the lofty balcony,
Rung trumpet, shalm, and psaltery:
Their clanging bowls old warriors quaff'd,
Loudly they spoke, and loudly laugh'd;
Whisper'd young knights, in tone more mild,
To ladies fair, and ladies smiled.
The hooded hawks, high perch'd on beam,
The clamour join'd with whistling scream,
And flapp'd their wings, and shook their bells,
In concert with the stag-hounds' yells.
Round go the flasks of ruddy wine,
From Bourdeaux, Orleans, or the Rhine;
Their tasks the busy sewers ply,
And all is mirth and revelry.

VII

The Goblin Page, omitting still
No opportunity of ill,
Strove now, while blood ran hot and high,
To rouse debate and jealousy;
Till Conrad, Lord of Wolfenstein,
By nature fierce, and warm with wine,
And now in humour highly cross'd,
About some steeds his band had lost,
High words to words succeeding still,
Smote, with his gauntlet, stout Hunthill;*
A hot and hardy Rutherford,
Whom men called Dickon Draw-the-sword.
He took it on the page's saye,
Hunthill had driven these steeds away.
Then Howard, Home, and Douglas rose,
The kindling discord to compose:
Stern Rutherford right little said,
But bit his glove,[1] and shook his head.—
A fortnight thence, in Inglewood,
Stout Conrad, cold, and drench'd in blood,
His bosom gored with many a wound,
Was by a woodman's lyme-dog found;

[1] To bite the thumb, or glove, seems not to have been considered on the Border as a gesture of contempt, but a pledge of mortal revenge.

Unknown the manner of his death,
Gone was his brand, both sword and sheath;
But ever from that time, 'twas said,
That Dickon wore a Cologne blade.

VIII

The dwarf, who fear'd his master's eye
Might his foul treachery espie,
Now sought the castle buttery,
Where many a yeoman, bold and free,
Revell'd as merrily and well
As those that sat in lordly selle.
Watt Tinlinn, there, did frankly raise
The pledge to Arthur Fire-the-Braes;
And he, as by his breeding bound,
To Howard's merry-men sent it round.
To quit them, on the English side,
Red Roland Forster loudly cried,
"A deep carouse to yon fair bride!"—
At every pledge, from vat and pail,
Foam'd forth in floods the nut-brown ale;
While shout the riders every one;
Such day of mirth ne'er cheer'd their clan,
Since old Buccleuch the name did gain,
When in the cleuch the buck was ta'en.

IX

The wily page, with vengeful thought,
Remember'd him of Tinlinn's yew,
And swore, it should be dearly bought
That ever he the arrow drew.
First, he the yeoman did molest,
With bitter gibe and taunting jest;
Told, how he fled at Solway strife,
And how Hob Armstrong cheer'd his wife;
Then, shunning still his powerful arm,
At unawares he wrought him harm;
From trencher stole his choicest cheer,
Dash'd from his lips his can of beer;
Then, to his knee sly creeping on,
With bodkin pierced him to the bone:

The venom'd wound, and festering joint,
Long after rued that bodkin's point.
The startled yeoman swore and spurn'd,
And board and flagons overturn'd.
Riot and clamour wild began;
Back to the hall the Urchin ran;
Took in a darkling nook his post,
And grinn'd, and mutter'd, "Lost! lost! lost!"

X

By this, the Dame, lest farther fray
Should mar the concord of the day,
Had bid the Minstrels tune their lay.
And first stept forth old Albert Græme,
The Minstrel of that ancient name:
Was none who struck the harp so well,
Within the Land Debateable;
Well friended, too, his hardy kin,
Whoever lost, were sure to win;
They sought the beeves that made their broth,
In Scotland and in England both.
In homely guise, as nature bade,
His simple song the Borderer said.

XI

ALBERT GRÆME

It was an English ladye bright
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall),
And she would marry a Scottish knight,
For Love will still be lord of all.

Blithely they saw the rising sun,
When he shone fair on Carlisle wall;
But they were sad ere day was done,
Though Love was still the lord of all.

Her sire gave brooch and jewel fine,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall;
Her brother gave but a flask of wine,
For ire that Love was lord of all.

For she had lands, both meadow and lea,
  Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,
And he swore her death, ere he would see
  A Scottish knight the lord of all!

XII

That wine she had not tasted well
  (The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall),
When dead, in her true love's arms, she fell,
  For Love was still the lord of all!

He pierced her brother to the heart,
  Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall:—
So perish all would true love part,
  That Love may still be lord of all!

And then he took the cross divine
  (Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall),
And died for her sake in Palestine,
  So Love was still the lord of all.

Now all ye lovers, that faithful prove
  (The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall),
Pray for their souls who died for love,
  For Love shall still be lord of all!

XIII

As ended Albert's simple lay,
  Arose a bard of loftier port;
For sonnet, rhyme, and roundelay,
  Renown'd in haughty Henry's court:
There rung thy harp, unrivall'd long,
Fitztraver of the silver song!
  The gentle Surrey loved his lyre—
    Who has not heard of Surrey's fame?[1]
  His was the hero's soul of fire,
    And his the bard's immortal name,
And his was love, exalted high
By all the glow of chivalry.

[1] The poet, Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, beheaded by Henry VIII. in 1547, on suspicion of treason.

XIV

They sought, together, climes afar,
And oft, within some olive grove,
When even came with twinkling star,
They sung of Surrey's absent love.
His step the Italian peasant stay'd,
And deem'd that spirits from on high,
Round where some hermit saint was laid,
Were breathing heavenly melody;
So sweet did harp and voice combine,
To praise the name of Geraldine.

XV

Fitztraver! O what tongue may say
The pangs thy faithful bosom knew,
When Surrey, of the deathless lay,
Ungrateful Tudor's sentence slew?
Regardless of the tyrant's frown,
His harp call'd wrath and vengeance down.
He left, for Naworth's iron towers,
Windsor's green glades, and courtly bowers,
And, faithful to his patron's name,
With Howard still Fitztraver came;
Lord William's foremost favourite he,
And chief of all his minstrelsy.

XVI

FITZTRAVER

'Twas All-soul's eve, and Surrey's heart beat high;
He heard the midnight bell with anxious start,
Which told the mystic hour, approaching nigh,
When wise Cornelius promised, by his art,
To show to him the ladye of his heart,
Albeit betwixt them roar'd the ocean grim;
Yet so the sage had hight to play his part,
That he should see her form in life and limb,
And mark, if still she loved, and still she thought of him.

XVII

Dark was the vaulted room of gramarye,
To which the wizard led the gallant Knight,

Save that before a mirror, huge and high,
A hallow'd taper shed a glimmering light
On mystic implements of magic might;
On cross, and character, and talisman,
And almagest, and altar, nothing bright:
For fitful was the lustre, pale and wan,
As watchlight by the bed of some departing man.

XVIII

But soon, within that mirror huge and high,
Was seen a self-emitted light to gleam;
And forms upon its breast the Earl 'gan spy,
Cloudy and indistinct, as feverish dream;
Till, slow arranging, and defined, they seem
To form a lordly and a lofty room,
Part lighted by a lamp with silver beam,
Placed by a couch of Agra's silken loom,
And part by moonshine pale, and part was hid in gloom.

XIX

Fair all the pageant—but how passing fair
The slender form, which lay on couch of Ind!
O'er her white bosom stray'd her hazel hair,
Pale her dear cheek, as if for love she pined;
All in her night-robe loose she lay reclined,
And, pensive, read from tablet eburnine,
Some strain that seem'd her inmost soul to find:—
That favour'd strain was Surrey's raptured line,
That fair and lovely form, the Lady Geraldine.

XX

Slow roll'd the clouds upon the lovely form,
And swept the goodly vision all away—
So royal envy roll'd the murky storm
O'er my beloved Master's glorious day.
Thou jealous, ruthless tyrant! Heaven repay
On thee, and on thy children's latest line,
The wild caprice of thy despotic sway,
The gory bridal bed, the plunder'd shrine,
The murder'd Surrey's blood, the tears of Geraldine!

XXI

Both Scots, and Southern chiefs, prolong
Applauses of Fitztraver's song;
These hated Henry's name as death,
And those still held the ancient faith.—
Then, from his seat, with lofty air,
Rose Harold, bard of brave St. Clair;
St. Clair, who, feasting high at Home,
Had with that lord to battle come.
Harold was born where restless seas
Howl round the storm-swept Orcades;
Where erst St. Clairs held princely sway
O'er isle and islet, strait and bay;—
Still nods their palace to its fall,
Thy pride and sorrow, fair Kirkwall!—
Thence oft he mark'd fierce Pentland rave,
As if grim Odin rode her wave;
And watch'd, the whilst, with visage pale,
And throbbing heart, the struggling sail;
For all of wonderful and wild
Had rapture for the lonely child.

XXII

And much of wild and wonderful
In these rude isles might fancy cull;
For thither came, in times afar,
Stern Lochlin's sons of roving war,
The Norsemen, train'd to spoil and blood,
Skill'd to prepare the raven's food;
Kings of the main their leaders brave,
Their barks the dragons of the wave.
And there, in many a stormy vale,
The Scald had told his wondrous tale;
And many a Runic column high
Had witness'd grim idolatry.
And thus had Harold, in his youth,
Learn'd many a Saga's rhyme uncouth,—
Of that Sea-Snake, tremendous curl'd,
Whose monstrous circle girds the world;
Of those dread Maids,[1] whose hideous yell

[1] Gray's Fatal Sisters, the Valkyriur or Selectors of the Slain, the Fates of Scandinavian superstition.

Maddens the battle's bloody swell;
Of chiefs, who, guided through the gloom
By the pale death-lights of the tomb,
Ransack'd the graves of warriors old,
Their falchions wrench'd from corpses' hold,[1]
Waked the deaf tomb with war's alarms,
And bade the dead arise to arms!
With war and wonder all on flame,
To Roslin's bowers young Harold came,
Where, by sweet glen and greenwood tree,
He learn'd a milder minstrelsy;
Yet something of the Northern spell
Mix'd with the softer numbers well.

XXIII

HAROLD

O listen, listen, ladies gay!
No haughty feat of arms I tell;
Soft is the note, and sad the lay,
That mourns the lovely Rosabelle.

"Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew!
And, gentle ladye, deign to stay!
Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch,
Nor tempt the stormy firth to-day.

"The blackening wave is edged with white;
To inch[2] and rock the sea-mews fly;
The fishers have heard the Water-Sprite,
Whose screams forbode that wreck is nigh.

"Last night the gifted Seer did view
A wet shroud swathed round ladye gay;
Then stay thee, Fair, in Ravensheuch:
Why cross the gloomy firth to-day?"—

"'Tis not because Lord Lindesay's heir
To-night at Roslin leads the ball,
But that my ladye-mother there
Sits lonely in her castle-hall.

[1] The northern warriors were usually entombed with their arms and other treasures.

[2] *Inch*, isle.

"'Tis not because the ring they ride,
And Lindesay at the ring rides well,
But that my sire the wine will chide,
If 'tis not fill'd by Rosabelle."—

O'er Roslin all that dreary night,
A wondrous blaze was seen to gleam;
'Twas broader than the watch-fire's light,
And redder than the bright moonbeam.

It glared on Roslin's castled rock,
It ruddied all the copse-wood glen;
'Twas seen from Dryden's groves of oak,
And seen from cavern'd Hawthornden.

Seem'd all on fire that chapel proud,
Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffin'd lie,
Each Baron, for a sable shroud,
Sheathed in his iron panoply.

Seem'd all on fire within, around,
Deep sacristy and altar's pale;
Shone every pillar foliage-bound,
And glimmer'd all the dead men's mail.

Blazed battlement and pinnet high,
Blazed every rose-carved buttress fair—
So still they blaze, when fate is nigh
The lordly line of high St. Clair.

There are twenty of Roslin's barons bold
Lie buried within that proud chapelle;
Each one the holy vault doth hold—
But the sea holds lovely Rosabelle!

And each St. Clair was buried there,
With candle, with book, and with knell;
But the sea-caves rung, and the wild winds sung,
The dirge of lovely Rosabelle.

XXIV

So sweet was Harold's piteous lay,
Scarce mark'd the guests the darken'd hall,
Though, long before the sinking day,
A wondrous shade involved them all:

It was not eddying mist or fog,
Drain'd by the sun from fen or bog;
Of no eclipse had sages told;
And yet, as it came on apace,
Each one could scarce his neighbour's face,
Could scarce his own stretch'd hand behold.
A secret horror check'd the feast,
And chill'd the soul of every guest;
Even the high Dame stood half aghast,
She knew some evil on the blast;
The elvish page fell to the ground,
And, shuddering, mutter'd, "Found! found! found!"[1]

XXV

Then sudden, through the darken'd air
A flash of lightning came;
So broad, so bright, so red the glare,
The castle seem'd on flame.
Glanced every rafter of the hall,
Glanced every shield upon the wall;
Each trophied beam, each sculptured stone,
Were instant seen, and instant gone;
Full through the guests' bedazzled band
Resistless flash'd the levin-brand,
And fill'd the hall with smouldering smoke,
As on the elvish page it broke.
It broke, with thunder long and loud,
Dismay'd the brave, appall'd the proud,—
From sea to sea the larum rung;
On Berwick wall, and at Carlisle withal,
To arms the startled warders sprung.
When ended was the dreadful roar,
The elvish dwarf was seen no more!

XXVI

Some heard a voice in Branksome-Hall,
Some saw a sight not seen by all;
That dreadful voice was heard by some,
Cry, with loud summons, "GYLBIN, COME!"

[1] *i.e.* his magician master, through the Lady's contrivance, has found and recalled him.

And on the spot where burst the brand,
Just where the page had flung him down,
Some saw an arm, and some a hand,
And some the waving of a gown.
The guests in silence pray'd and shook,
And terror dimm'd each lofty look.
But none of all the astonished train
Was so dismay'd as Deloraine;
His blood did freeze, his brain did burn,
'Twas fear'd his mind would ne'er return;
For he was speechless, ghastly, wan,
Like him of whom the story ran,
Who spoke the spectre-hound in Man.*
At length, by fits, he darkly told,
With broken hint, and shuddering cold—
That he had seen, right certainly,
*A shape with amice wrapp'd around,*
*With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,*
*Like pilgrim from beyond the sea;*
And knew—but how it matter'd not—
It was the wizard, Michael Scott.

XXVII

The anxious crowd, with horror pale,
All trembling heard the wondrous tale;
No sound was made, no word was spoke,
Till noble Angus silence broke;
And he a solemn sacred plight
Did to St. Bride of Douglas make,
That he a pilgrimage would take
To Melrose Abbey, for the sake
Of Michael's restless sprite.
Then each, to ease his troubled breast,
To some bless'd saint his prayers address'd:
Some to St. Modan made their vows,
Some to St. Mary of the Lowes,
Some to the Holy Rood of Lisle,
Some to our Ladye of the Isle;
Each did his patron witness make,
That he such pilgrimage would take,
And monks should sing, and bells should toll,
All for the weal of Michael's soul.

While vows were ta'en, and prayers were pray'd,
'Tis said the noble dame, dismay'd,
Renounced, for aye, dark magic's aid.

XXVIII

Nought of the bridal will I tell,
Which after in short space befell;
Nor how brave sons and daughters fair
Bless'd Teviot's Flower, and Cranstoun's heir:
After such dreadful scene, 'twere vain
To wake the note of mirth again.
More meet it were to mark the day
Of penitence and prayer divine,
When pilgrim chiefs, in sad array,
Sought Melrose' holy shrine.

XXIX

With naked foot, and sackcloth vest,
And arms enfolded on his breast,
Did every pilgrim go;
The standers-by might hear uneath,
Footstep, or voice, or high-drawn breath,
Through all the lengthen'd row:
No lordly look, nor martial stride;
Gone was their glory, sunk their pride,
Forgotten their renown;
Silent and slow, like ghosts they glide
To the high altar's hallow'd side,
And there they knelt them down:
Above the suppliant chieftains wave
The banners of departed brave;
Beneath the letter'd stones were laid
The ashes of their fathers dead;
From many a garnish'd niche around,
Stern saints and tortured martyrs frown'd.

XXX

And slow up the dim aisle afar,
With sable cowl and scapular,
And snow-white stoles, in order due,
The holy Fathers, two and two,

In long procession came;
Taper, and host, and book they bare,
And holy banner, flourish'd fair
With the Redeemer's name.
Above the prostrate pilgrim band
The mitred Abbot stretch'd his hand,
And bless'd them as they kneel'd;
With holy cross he sign'd them all,
And pray'd they might be sage in hall,
And fortunate in field.
Then mass was sung, and prayers were said,
And solemn requiem for the dead;
And bells toll'd out their mighty peal,
For the departed spirit's weal;
And ever in the office close
The hymn of intercession rose;
And far the echoing aisles prolong
The awful burthen of the song,—
DIES IRÆ, DIES ILLA,
SOLVET SÆCLUM IN FAVILLA;
While the pealing organ rung.
Were it meet with sacred strain
To close my lay, so light and vain,
Thus the holy Fathers sung:—

XXXI

HYMN FOR THE DEAD

That day of wrath, that dreadful day,
When heaven and earth shall pass away,
What power shall be the sinner's stay?
How shall he meet that dreadful day?

When, shrivelling like a parched scroll,
The flaming heavens together roll;
When louder yet, and yet more dread,
Swells the high trump that wakes the dead!

Oh! on that day, that wrathful day,
When man to judgment wakes from clay,
Be THOU the trembling sinner's stay,
Though heaven and earth shall pass away!

Hush'd is the harp—the Minstrel gone.
And did he wander forth alone?
Alone, in indigence and age,
To linger out his pilgrimage?
No!—close beneath proud Newark's tower
Arose the Minstrel's lowly bower;
A simple hut; but there was seen
The little garden hedged with green,
The cheerful hearth, and lattice clean.
There shelter'd wanderers, by the blaze,
Oft heard the tale of other days;
For much he loved to ope his door,
And give the aid he begg'd before.
So pass'd the winter's day; but still,
When summer smiled on sweet Bowhill,
And July's eve, with balmy breath,
Waved the blue-bells on Newark heath;
When throstles sung in Harehead-shaw,*
And corn was green on Carterhaugh,
And flourish'd, broad, Blackandro's oak,
The aged Harper's soul awoke!
Then would he sing achievements high,
And circumstance of chivalry,
Till the rapt traveller would stay,
Forgetful of the closing day;
And noble youths, the strain to hear,
Forsook the hunting of the deer;
And Yarrow, as he roll'd along,
Bore burden to the Minstrel's song.

# MARMION

## A TALE OF FLODDEN FIELD

### IN SIX CANTOS

### Introduction to Canto First

To WILLIAM STEWART ROSE, Esq.[1]

*Ashestiel, Ettrick Forest.*

NOVEMBER's sky is chill and drear,
November's leaf is red and sear:
Late, gazing down the steepy linn,
That hems our little garden in,
Low in its dark and narrow glen,
You scarce the rivulet might ken,
So thick the tangled greenwood grew,
So feeble trill'd the streamlet through:
Now, murmuring hoarse, and frequent seen
Through bush and brier, no longer green,

[1] The friends to whom the introductory epistles are addressed were all comrades in the study of romance and mediæval antiquities. Rose, a Hampshire gentleman, translated Berni and Ariosto, and wrote various metrical romances, to which allusion is made in the last lines of this epistle.

An angry brook, it sweeps the glade,
Brawls over rock and wild cascade,
And, foaming brown with doubled speed,
Hurries its waters to the Tweed.

No longer Autumn's glowing red
Upon our Forest hills is shed;
No more, beneath the evening beam,
Fair Tweed reflects their purple gleam;
Away hath pass'd the heather-bell
That bloom'd so rich on Needpath Fell;*
Sallow his brow, and russet bare
Are now the sister-heights of Yair.
The sheep, before the pinching heaven,
To shelter'd dale and down are driven,
Where yet some faded herbage pines,
And yet a watery sunbeam shines:
In meek despondency they eye
The wither'd sward and wintry sky,
And far beneath their summer hill,
Stray sadly by Glenkinnon's rill:*
The shepherd shifts his mantle's fold,
And wraps him closer from the cold;
His dogs no merry circles wheel,
But, shivering, follow at his heel;
A cowering glance they often cast,
As deeper moans the gathering blast.

My imps, though hardy, bold, and wild,
As best befits the mountain child,
Feel the sad influence of the hour,
And wail the daisy's vanish'd flower;
Their summer gambols tell, and mourn,
And anxious ask,—Will spring return,
And birds and lambs again be gay,
And blossoms clothe the hawthorn spray?

Yes, prattlers, yes. The daisy's flower
Again shall paint your summer bower;
Again the hawthorn shall supply
The garlands you delight to tie;
The lambs upon the lea shall bound,

The wild birds carol to the round,
And while you frolic light as they,
Too short shall seem the summer day.

To mute and to material things
New life revolving summer brings;
The genial call dead Nature hears,
And in her glory reappears.
But oh! my Country's wintry state
What second spring shall renovate?
What powerful call shall bid arise
The buried warlike and the wise;
The mind that thought for Britain's weal,
The hand that grasp'd the victor steel?
The vernal sun new life bestows
Even on the meanest flower that blows;
But vainly, vainly may he shine,
Where glory weeps o'er NELSON's shrine;
And vainly pierce the solemn gloom,
That shrouds, O PITT, thy hallow'd tomb.

Deep graved in every British heart,
O never let those names depart!
Say to your sons,—Lo, here his grave,
Who victor died on Gadite wave;[1]
To him, as to the burning levin,
Short, bright, resistless course was given.
Where'er his country's foes were found,
Was heard the fated thunder's sound,
Till burst the bolt on yonder shore,
Roll'd, blazed, destroy'd,—and was no more.

Nor mourn ye less his perish'd worth,
Who bade the conqueror go forth,
And launch'd that thunderbolt of war
On Egypt, Hafnia,[2] Trafalgar;
Who, born to guide such high emprize,
For Britain's weal was early wise;
Alas! to whom the Almighty gave,
For Britain's sins, an early grave!

[1] Nelson. [2] Copenhagen.

His worth, who, in his mightiest hour,
A bauble held the pride of power,
Spurn'd at the sordid lust of pelf,
And served his Albion for herself;
Who, when the frantic crowd amain
Strain'd at subjection's bursting rein,
O'er their wild mood full conquest gain'd,
The pride, he would not crush, restrain'd,
Show'd their fierce zeal a worthier cause,
And brought the freeman's arm, to aid the freeman's laws.

Hadst thou but lived, though stripp'd of power,
A watchman on the lonely tower,
Thy thrilling trump had roused the land,
When fraud or danger were at hand;
By thee, as by the beacon-light,
Our pilots had kept course aright;
As some proud column, though alone,
Thy strength had propp'd the tottering throne:
Now is the stately column broke,
The beacon-light is quench'd in smoke,
The trumpet's silver sound is still,
The warder silent on the hill!

Oh think, how to his latest day,
When Death, just hovering, claim'd his prey,
With Palinure's unalter'd mood,
Firm at his dangerous post he stood;
Each call for needful rest repell'd,
With dying hand the rudder held,
Till, in his fall, with fateful sway,
The steerage of the realm gave way!
Then, while on Britain's thousand plains,
One unpolluted church remains,
Whose peaceful bells ne'er sent around
The bloody tocsin's maddening sound,
But still, upon the hallow'd day,
Convoke the swains to praise and pray;
While faith and civil peace are dear,
Grace this cold marble with a tear,—
He, who preserved them, PITT, lies here!

Nor yet suppress the generous sigh,
Because his rival slumbers nigh;
Nor be thy *requiescat* dumb,
Lest it be said o'er Fox's tomb.
For talents mourn, untimely lost,*
When best employ'd, and wanted most;
Mourn genius high, and lore profound,
And wit that loved to play, not wound;
And all the reasoning powers divine,
To penetrate, resolve, combine;
And feelings keen, and fancy's glow,—
They sleep with him who sleeps below:
And, if thou mourn'st they could not save
From error him who owns this grave,
Be every harsher thought suppress'd,
And sacred be the last long rest.
*Here*, where the end of earthly things
Lays heroes, patriots, bards, and kings;
Where stiff the hand, and still the tongue,
Of those who fought, and spoke, and sung;
*Here*, where the fretted aisles prolong
The distant notes of holy song,
As if some angel spoke agen,
"All peace on earth, good-will to men";
If ever from an English heart,
O, *here* let prejudice depart,
And, partial feeling cast aside,
Record, that Fox a Briton died![1]
When Europe crouch'd to France's yoke,
And Austria bent, and Prussia broke,
And the firm Russian's purpose brave,
Was barter'd by a timorous slave,
Even then dishonour's peace he spurn'd,
The sullied olive-branch return'd,
Stood for his country's glory fast,
And nail'd her colours to the mast!
Heaven, to reward his firmness, gave
A portion in this honour'd grave,
And ne'er held marble in its trust
Of two such wondrous men the dust.

[1] This line gave special offence to Jeffrey, who took it to imply that Fox did not *live* a Briton—*i.e.* that his political conduct was unpatriotic.

With more than mortal powers endow'd,
How high they soar'd above the crowd!
Theirs was no common party race,
Jostling by dark intrigue for place;
Like fabled Gods, their mighty war
Shook realms and nations in its jar;
Beneath each banner proud to stand,
Look'd up the noblest of the land,
Till through the British world were known
The names of PITT and FOX alone.
Spells of such force no wizard grave
E'er framed in dark Thessalian cave,
Though his could drain the ocean dry,
And force the planets from the sky.
These spells are spent, and, spent with these,
The wine of life is on the lees.
Genius, and taste, and talent gone,
For ever tomb'd beneath the stone,
Where—taming thought to human pride!—
The mighty chiefs sleep side by side.
Drop upon FOX's grave the tear,
'Twill trickle to his rival's bier;
O'er PITT's the mournful requiem sound,
And FOX's shall the notes rebound.
The solemn echo seems to cry,—
"Here let their discord with them die.
Speak not for those a separate doom,
Whom Fate made Brothers in the tomb:
But search the land of living men,
Where wilt thou find their like agen?"

Rest, ardent Spirits! till the cries
Of dying Nature bid you rise;
Not even your Britain's groans can pierce
The leaden silence of your hearse;
Then, O, how impotent and vain
This grateful tributary strain!
Though not unmark'd from northern clime,
Ye heard the Border Minstrel's rhyme:
His Gothic harp has o'er you rung;
The Bard you deign'd to praise, your deathless
names has sung.

Stay yet, illusion, stay a while,
My wilder'd fancy still beguile!
From this high theme how can I part,
Ere half unloaded is my heart!
For all the tears e'er sorrow drew,
And all the raptures fancy knew,
And all the keener rush of blood,
That throbs through bard in bard-like mood,
Were here a tribute mean and low,
Though all their mingled streams could flow—
Woe, wonder, and sensation high,
In one spring-tide of ecstasy!—
It will not be—it may not last—
The vision of enchantment's past:
Like frostwork in the morning ray,
The fancied fabric melts away;
Each Gothic arch, memorial-stone,
And long, dim, lofty aisle, are gone;
And, lingering last, deception dear,
The choir's high sounds die on my ear.
Now slow return the lonely down,
The silent pastures bleak and brown,
The farm begirt with copsewood wild,
The gambols of each frolic child,
Mixing their shrill cries with the tone
Of Tweed's dark waters rushing on.

Prompt on unequal tasks to run,
Thus Nature disciplines her son:
Meeter, she says, for me to stray,
And waste the solitary day,
In plucking from yon fen the reed,
And watch it floating down the Tweed;
Or idly list the shrilling lay,
With which the milkmaid cheers her way,
Marking its cadence rise and fail,
As from the field, beneath her pail,
She trips it down the uneven dale:
Meeter for me, by yonder cairn,
The ancient shepherd's tale to learn;
Though oft he stop in rustic fear,
Lest his old legends tire the ear

Of one, who, in his simple mind,
May boast of book-learn'd taste refined.

But thou, my friend, canst fitly tell
(For few have read romance so well)
How still the legendary lay
O'er poet's bosom holds its sway;
How on the ancient minstrel strain
Time lays his palsied hand in vain;
And how our hearts at doughty deeds,
By warriors wrought in steely weeds,
Still throb for fear and pity's sake;
As when the Champion of the Lake
Enters Morgana's fated house,
Or in the Chapel Perilous,
Despising spells and demons' force,
Holds converse with the unburied corse;[1]
Or when, Dame Ganore's grace to move
(Alas, that lawless was their love!),
He sought proud Tarquin in his den,
And freed full sixty knights; or when,
A sinful man, and unconfess'd,
He took the Sangreal's holy quest,
And, slumbering, saw the vision high,
He might not view with waking eye.

The mightiest chiefs of British song
Scorn'd not such legends to prolong:
They gleam through Spenser's elfin dream,
And mix in Milton's heavenly theme;
And Dryden, in immortal strain,
Had raised the Table Round again,[2]
But that a ribald King and Court
Bade him toil on, to make them sport;
Demanded for their niggard pay,
Fit for their souls, a looser lay;
Licentious satire, song, and play;

[1] See Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, a fifteenth century compendium of the Arthurian romances.

[2] Dryden, like Milton, at one time proposed to make the Arthurian story a subject for an epic.

The world defrauded of the high design,
Profaned the God-given strength, and marr'd the lofty line.

Warm'd by such names, well may we then,
Though dwindled sons of little men,
Essay to break a feeble lance
In the fair fields of old romance;
Or seek the moated castle's cell,
Where long through talisman and spell,
While tyrants ruled, and damsels wept,
Thy Genius, Chivalry, hath slept:
There sound the harpings of the North,
Till he awake and sally forth,
On venturous quest to prick again,
In all his arms, with all his train,
Shield, lance, and brand, and plume, and scarf,
Fay, giant, dragon, squire, and dwarf,
And wizard with his wand of might,
And errant maid on palfrey white.
Around the Genius weave their spells,
Pure Love, who scarce his passion tells;
Mystery, half veil'd and half reveal'd;
And Honour, with his spotless shield;
Attention, with fix'd eye; and Fear,
That loves the tale she shrinks to hear;
And gentle Courtesy; and Faith,
Unchanged by sufferings, time, or death;
And Valour, lion-mettled lord,
Leaning upon his own good sword.

Well has thy fair achievement shown,
A worthy meed may thus be won;
Ytene's [1] oaks—beneath whose shade
Their theme the merry minstrels made,
Of Ascapart, and Bevis bold,
And that Red King,[2] who, while of old,
Through Boldrewood the chase he led,
By his loved huntsman's arrow bled—
Ytene's oaks have heard again

[1] The New Forest in Hampshire, anciently so called.
[2] William Rufus.

Renew'd such legendary strain;
For thou hast sung how He of Gaul,
That Amadis so famed in hall,
For Oriana, foil'd in fight
The Necromancer's felon might;
And well in modern verse hast wove
Partenopex's mystic love:
Hear, then, attentive to my lay,
A knightly tale of Albion's elder day.

## CANTO FIRST

### The Castle

I

Day set on Norham's castled steep,[1]
And Tweed's fair river, broad and deep,
And Cheviot's mountains lone:
The battled towers, the donjon keep,
The loophole grates, where captives weep,
The flanking walls that round it sweep,
In yellow lustre shone.
The warriors on the turrets high,
Moving athwart the evening sky,
Seem'd forms of giant height:
Their armour, as it caught the rays,
Flash'd back again the western blaze,
In lines of dazzling light.

II

Saint George's banner, broad and gay,
Now faded, as the fading ray

[1] Norham Castle stood on the south bank of the Tweed, about six miles above Berwick. When Scott was bantered about the route by which he brought Marmion into Scotland, and reminded that the regular road was by the coast, he laughingly answered that he chose the road for purposes of description. There were good scenes on the coast too; but he would make Marmion visit Tantallon Castle before they parted company.

Now bright, now less, was flung
The varying gale that wantoned with the pennon
To sport it on the Donjon Tower,
As heavily it hung
The scarcely lifted folds to mortal ken,
The Castle gates were barred;
Above the gloomy portal arch,
Timing the footsteps of a guard,
The Warder kept his round,
Low humming, as he paced along,
Some ancient border slogan and rude lay.

XV

A damsel passing might be seen;
For lovely ever, and ever queen,
Our Minstrel felt a glance[1] of spleen,
Beneath a passion gay:
A horseman, hieing from the crowd,
Like lightning from a summer cloud,
Spurs at his utmost reserve pressed,
Before the lists array,
Beneath the castle gateway,
That shewed the Warder lowering,
His knightly lance to view;
The warder hasted from his wall,
And wan'd the Captain in the hall,
For well the blast he knew;
And joyfully that knight did call,
To arms, to arms, and scrambled

XVI

—Now forward, for a page of Malvoisie
Bring goblets of the clear,
And quickly make the entrance free,
And bid my heralds ready be,
And sweet minstrels sound his glee,
And all our trumpets blow.

[1] This harmonious epithet applies to a flight of waterfowl; but is applied, by analogy, to a body of horse:—

"There is a knight of the North Country,
Which leads a lusty plump of spears."—Fuller.

And, from the platform, spare ye not
To fire a noble salvo-shot;
Lord MARMION waits below!"
Then to the Castle's lower ward
Sped forty yeomen tall,
The iron-studded gates unbarr'd,
Raised the portcullis' ponderous guard,
The lofty palisade unsparr'd,
And let the drawbridge fall.

V

Along the bridge Lord Marmion rode,
Proudly his red-roan charger trode,
His helm hung at the saddlebow;
Well by his visage you might know
He was a stalworth knight, and keen,
And had in many a battle been.
The scar on his brown cheek reveal'd
A token true of Bosworth field;
His eyebrow dark, and eye of fire,
Show'd spirit proud, and prompt to ire;
Yet lines of thought upon his cheek
Did deep design and counsel speak.
His forehead, by his casque worn bare,
His thick mustache, and curly hair,
Coal-black, and grizzled here and there,
But more through toil than age;
His square-turn'd joints, and strength of limb,
Show'd him no carpet knight so trim,
But in close fight a champion grim,
In camps a leader sage.

VI

Well was he arm'd from head to heel,
In mail and plate of Milan steel;
But his strong helm, of mighty cost,
Was all with burnish'd gold emboss'd;
Amid the plumage of the crest,
A falcon hover'd on her nest,
With wings outspread, and forward breast:
E'en such a falcon, on his shield,
Soar'd sable in an azure field:

The golden legend bore aright,
Who checks at me, to death is dight.
Blue was the charger's broider'd rein;
Blue ribbons deck'd his arching mane;
The knightly housing's ample fold
Was velvet blue, and trapp'd with gold.

VII

Behind him rode two gallant squires,
Of noble name, and knightly sires;
They burn'd the gilded spurs to claim:
For well could each a war-horse tame,
Could draw the bow, the sword could sway,
And lightly bear the ring away;
Nor less with courteous precepts stored,
Could dance in hall, and carve at board,
And frame love-ditties passing rare,
And sing them to a lady fair.

VIII

Four men-at-arms came at their backs,
With halbert, bill, and battle-axe:
They bore Lord Marmion's lance so strong,
And led his sumpter-mules along,
And ambling palfrey, when at need
Him listed ease his battle-steed.
The last and trustiest of the four,
On high his forky pennon bore;
Like swallow's tail, in shape and hue,
Flutter'd the streamer glossy blue,
Where, blazon'd sable, as before,
The towering falcon seem'd to soar.
Last, twenty yeomen, two and two,
In hosen black, and jerkins blue,
With falcons broider'd on each breast,
Attended on their lord's behest.
Each, chosen for an archer good,
Knew hunting-craft by lake or wood;
Each one a six-foot bow could bend,
And far a cloth-yard shaft could send;
Each held a boar-spear tough and strong,
And at their belts their quivers rung.

Their dusty palfreys, and array,
Show'd they had march'd a weary way.

IX

'Tis meet that I should tell you now,
How fairly arm'd, and order'd how,
The soldiers of the guard,
With musket, pike, and morion,
To welcome noble Marmion,
Stood in the Castle-yard ;
Minstrels and trumpeters were there,
The gunner held his linstock yare,
For welcome-shot prepared :
Enter'd the train, and such a clang,
As then through all his turrets rang,
Old Norham never heard.

X

The guards their morrice-pikes advanced,
The trumpets flourish'd brave,
The cannon from the ramparts glanced,
And thundering welcome gave.
A blithe salute, in martial sort,
The minstrels well might sound,
For, as Lord Marmion cross'd the court,
He scatter'd angels round.
"Welcome to Norham, Marmion !
Stout heart, and open hand !
Well dost thou brook thy gallant roan,
Thou flower of English land ! "

XI

Two pursuivants, whom tabarts deck,
With silver scutcheon round their neck,
Stood on the steps of stone,
By which you reach the donjon gate,
And there, with herald pomp and state,
They hail'd Lord Marmion :
They hail'd him Lord of Fontenaye,
Of Lutterward, and Scrivelbaye,

Of Tamworth tower and town;[1]
And he, their courtesy to requite,
Gave them a chain of twelve marks' weight,
All as he lighted down.
"Now, largesse, largesse,[2] Lord Marmion,
Knight of the crest of gold!
A blazon'd shield, in battle won,
Ne'er guarded heart so bold."

XII

They marshall'd him to the Castle-hall,
Where the guests stood all aside,
And loudly flourish'd the trumpet-call,
And the heralds loudly cried,—
"Room, lordlings, room for Lord Marmion,
With the crest and helm of gold!
Full well we know the trophies won
In the lists at Cottiswold:
There, vainly Ralph de Wilton strove
'Gainst Marmion's force to stand;
To him he lost his lady-love,
And to the King his land.
Ourselves beheld the listed field,
A sight both sad and fair;
We saw Lord Marmion pierce his shield,
And saw his saddle bare;
We saw the victor win the crest
He wears with worthy pride;
And on the gibbet-tree, reversed,
His foeman's scutcheon tied.
Place, nobles, for the Falcon-Knight!
Room, room, ye gentles gay,
For him who conquer'd in the right,
Marmion of Fontenaye!"

1 Scott explained in his Notes to the poem that he had not created a new family in the person of Marmion, but only revived an old one. The line of Marmions, lords of the lands mentioned in the text, became extinct in the reign of Edward I. They held the office of hereditary Royal Champion, which passed to a descendant through the female side.

2 The cry with which heralds and pursuivants were wont to acknowledge the bounty received from the knights.

XIII

Then stepp'd to meet that noble Lord,
Sir Hugh the Heron bold,
Baron of Twisell, and of Ford,
And Captain of the Hold.[1]
He led Lord Marmion to the deas,
Raised o'er the pavement high,
And placed him in the upper place—
They feasted full and high:
The whiles a Northern harper rude
Chanted a rhyme of deadly feud,[2]
"*How the fierce Thirwalls,* and Ridleys all,*
*Stout Willimondswick,*
*And Hardriding Dick,*
*And Hughie of Hawdon, and Will o' the Wall,*
*Have set on Sir Albany Featherstonhaugh,*
*And taken his life at the Deadman's-shaw.*"
Scantly Lord Marmion's ear could brook
The harper's barbarous lay;
Yet much he praised the pains he took,
And well those pains did pay:
For lady's suit, and minstrel's strain,
By knight should ne'er be heard in vain.

XIV

"Now, good Lord Marmion," Heron says,
"Of your fair courtesy,
I pray you bide some little space
In this poor tower with me.
Here may you keep your arms from rust,
May breathe your war-horse well;
Seldom hath past a week but giust
Or feat of arms befell:
The Scots can rein a mettled steed,
And love to couch a spear;—
Saint George! a stirring life they lead,
That have such neighbours near.
Then stay with us a little space,
Our northern wars to learn;

[1] The name of the historical castellan of Norham at this time was, Scott explains, William, not Hugh.

[2] The ballad is given at length in the *Border Minstrelsy*.

I pray you for your lady's grace!"—
Lord Marmion's brow grew stern.

XV

The Captain mark'd his alter'd look,
And gave a squire the sign;
A mighty wassail-bowl he took,
And crown'd it high in wine.
"Now pledge me here, Lord Marmion:
But first I pray thee fair,
Where hast thou left that page of thine,
That used to serve thy cup of wine,
Whose beauty was so rare?
When last in Raby towers we met,
The boy I closely eyed,
And often mark'd his cheeks were wet,
With tears he fain would hide:
His was no rugged horse-boy's hand,
To burnish shield or sharpen brand,
Or saddle battle-steed;
But meeter seem'd for lady fair,
To fan her cheek or curl her hair,
Or through embroidery, rich and rare,
The slender silk to lead:
His skin was fair, his ringlets gold,
His bosom—when he sigh'd,
The russet doublet's rugged fold
Could scarce repel its pride!
Say, hast thou given that lovely youth
To serve in lady's bower?
Or was the gentle page, in sooth,
A gentle paramour?"

XVI

Lord Marmion ill could brook such jest;
He roll'd his kindling eye,
With pain his rising wrath suppress'd,
Yet made a calm reply:
"That boy thou thought'st so goodly fair,
He might not brook the northern air.
More of his fate if thou wouldst learn,

I left him sick in Lindisfarne:[1]
Enough of him.—But, Heron, say,
Why does thy lovely lady gay
Disdain to grace the hall to-day?
Or has that dame, so fair and sage,
Gone on some pious pilgrimage?"—
He spoke in covert scorn, for fame
Whisper'd light tales of Heron's dame.

XVII

Unmark'd, at least unreck'd, the taunt,
Careless the Knight replied,
"No bird, whose feathers gaily flaunt,
Delights in cage to bide:
Norham is grim and grated close,
Hemm'd in by battlement and fosse,
And many a darksome tower;
And better loves my lady bright
To sit in liberty and light,
In fair Queen Margaret's bower.
We hold our greyhound in our hand,
Our falcon on our glove;
But where shall we find leash or band,
For dame that loves to rove?
Let the wild falcon soar her swing,
She'll stoop when she has tired her wing."—

XVIII

"Nay, if with Royal James's bride
The lovely Lady Heron bide,
Behold me here a messenger,
Your tender greetings prompt to bear;
For, to the Scottish court address'd,
I journey at our King's behest,
And pray you, of your grace, provide
For me, and mine, a trusty guide.
I have not ridden in Scotland since
James back'd the cause of that mock prince,

[1] Lindisfarne, an isle on the coast of Northumberland, was called Holy Island from the sanctity of its ancient monastery, and from its having been the Episcopal seat of the See of Durham during the early ages of British Christianity. St. Cuthbert was Bishop there in the seventh century.

Warbeck, that Flemish counterfeit,
Who on the gibbet paid the cheat.
Then did I march with Surrey's power,
What time we razed old Ayton Tower."—[1]

XIX

"For such-like need, my lord, I trow,
Norham can find you guides enow;
For here be some have prick'd as far,
On Scottish ground, as to Dunbar;
Have drunk the monks of St. Bothan's ale,
And driven the beeves of Lauderdale;
Harried the wives of Greenlaw's goods,
And given them light to set their hoods."—[2]

XX

"Now, in good sooth," Lord Marmion cried,
"Were I in warlike wise to ride,
A better guard I would not lack,
Than your stout forayers at my back;
But, as in form of peace I go,
A friendly messenger, to know
Why through all Scotland, near and far,
Their King is mustering troops for war,
The sight of plundering Border spears
Might justify suspicious fears,
And deadly feud, or thirst of spoil,
Break out in some unseemly broil:
A herald were my fitting guide;
Or friar, sworn in peace to bide;
Or pardoner, or travelling priest,
Or strolling pilgrim, at the least."

XXI

The Captain mused a little space,
And pass'd his hand across his face.—
"Fain would I find the guide you want,
But ill may spare a pursuivant,

1 This Surrey was the grandfather of the poet mentioned in the *Lay*. James IV. gave one of his own relations in marriage to Perkin Warbeck, and made war on England in his cause.

2 The garrisons of the English castles of Wark, Norham, and Berwick were troublesome neighbours to Scotland.

The only men that safe can ride
Mine errands on the Scottish side:
And though a bishop built this fort,
Few holy brethren here resort;
Even our good chaplain, as I ween,
Since our last siege, we have not seen:
The mass he might not sing or say,
Upon one stinted meal a-day;
So, safe he sat in Durham aisle,
And pray'd for our success the while.
Our Norham vicar, woe betide,
Is all too well in case to ride;
The priest of Shoreswood—he could rein
The wildest war-horse in your train;
But then, no spearman in the hall
Will sooner swear, or stab, or brawl.
Friar John of Tillmouth were the man:
A blithesome brother at the can,
A welcome guest in hall and bower,
He knows each castle, town, and tower,
In which the wine and ale is good,
'Twixt Newcastle and Holy-Rood.
But that good man, as ill befalls,
Hath seldom left our castle walls,
Since, on the vigil of St. Bede,
In evil hour, he cross'd the Tweed,
To teach Dame Alison her creed.
Old Bughtrig found him with his wife;
And John, an enemy to strife,
Sans frock and hood, fled for his life.
The jealous churl hath deeply swore,
That, if again he venture o'er,
He shall shrieve penitent no more.
Little he loves such risks, I know;
Yet, in your guard, perchance will go."

XXII

Young Selby, at the fair hall-board,
Carved to his uncle and that lord,
And reverently took up the word.—
"Kind uncle, woe were we each one,
If harm should hap to brother John.

He is a man of mirthful speech,
Can many a game and gambol teach;
Full well at tables can he play,
And sweep at bowls the stake away.
None can a lustier carol bawl,
The needfullest among us all,
When time hangs heavy in the hall,
And snow comes thick at Christmas tide,
And we can neither hunt, nor ride
A foray on the Scottish side.
The vow'd revenge of Bughtrig rude,
May end in worse than loss of hood.
Let Friar John, in safety, still
In chimney-corner snore his fill,
Roast hissing crabs, or flagons swill:
Last night, to Norham there came one,
Will better guide Lord Marmion."—
"Nephew," quoth Heron, "by my fay,
Well hast thou spoke; say forth thy say."—

XXIII

"Here is a holy Palmer come,
From Salem first, and last from Rome;
One, that hath kiss'd the blessed tomb,
And visited each holy shrine
In Araby and Palestine;
On hills of Armenie hath been,
Where Noah's ark may yet be seen;
By that Red Sea, too, hath he trod,
Which parted at the Prophet's rod;
In Sinai's wilderness he saw
The Mount, where Israel heard the law,
'Mid thunder-dint and flashing levin,
And shadows, mists, and darkness, given.
He shows Saint James's cockle-shell;
Of fair Montserrat, too, can tell;
And of that Grot where Olives nod,
Where, darling of each heart and eye,
From all the youth of Sicily,
Saint Rosalie retired to God.[1]

[1] Scott here enumerates some of the most famous places of pilgrimage in the Middle Ages.

XXIV

"To stout Saint George of Norwich merry,
Saint Thomas, too, of Canterbury,
Cuthbert of Durham and Saint Bede,
For his sins' pardon hath he pray'd.
He knows the passes of the North,
And seeks far shrines beyond the Forth;
Little he eats, and long will wake,
And drinks but of the stream or lake.
This were a guide o'er moor and dale;
But, when our John hath quaff'd his ale,
As little as the wind that blows,
And warms itself against his nose,
Kens he, or cares, which way he goes."—

XXV

"Gramercy!" quoth Lord Marmion,
"Full loth were I that Friar John,
That venerable man, for me
Were placed in fear or jeopardy.
If this same Palmer will me lead
From hence to Holy-Rood,
Like his good saint, I'll pay his meed,
Instead of cockle-shell, or bead,
With angels fair and good.
I love such holy ramblers; still
They know to charm a weary hill,
With song, romance, or lay:
Some jovial tale, or glee, or jest,
Some lying legend, at the least,
They bring to cheer the way."—

XXVI

"Ah! noble sir," young Selby said,
And finger on his lip he laid,
"This man knows much—perchance e'en more
Than he could learn by holy lore.
Still to himself he's muttering,
And shrinks as at some unseen thing.
Last night we listen'd at his cell;
Strange sounds we heard, and, sooth to tell,

He murmur'd on till morn, howe'er
No living mortal could be near.
Sometimes I thought I heard it plain,
As other voices spoke again.
I cannot tell—I like it not—
Friar John hath told us it is wrote,
No conscience clear, and void of wrong,
Can rest awake, and pray so long.
Himself still sleeps before his beads
Have mark'd ten aves, and two creeds."—

XXVII

"Let pass," quoth Marmion; "by my fay,
This man shall guide me on my way,
Although the great arch-fiend and he
Had sworn themselves of company.
So please you, gentle youth, to call
This Palmer[1] to the Castle-hall."
The summon'd Palmer came in place:
His sable cowl o'erhung his face;
In his black mantle was he clad,
With Peter's keys, in cloth of red,
On his broad shoulders wrought;
The scallop-shell his cap did deck;
The crucifix around his neck
Was from Loretto brought;
His sandals were with travel tore,
Staff, budget, bottle, scrip, he wore;
The faded palm-branch in his hand
Show'd pilgrim from the Holy Land.

XXVIII

When as the Palmer came in hall,
Nor lord, nor knight, was there more tall,
Or had a statelier step withal,
Or look'd more high and keen;
For no saluting did he wait,
But strode across the hall of state,
And fronted Marmion where he sate,

[1] The palmer was so called from his bearing a palm as a sign that he had been in the Holy Land. A palmer, as opposed to a pilgrim, was one who made it his sole business to visit different holy shrines—a professional pilgrim.

As he his peer had been.
But his gaunt frame was worn with toil;
His cheek was sunk, alas, the while!
And when he struggled at a smile,
His eye look'd haggard wild:
Poor wretch! the mother that him bare,
If she had been in presence there,
In his wan face, and sun-burn'd hair,
She had not known her child.*
Danger, long travel, want, or woe,
Soon change the form that best we know—
For deadly fear can time outgo,
And blanch at once the hair;
Hard toil can roughen form and face,
And want can quench the eye's bright grace,
Nor does old age a wrinkle trace
More deeply than despair.
Happy whom none of these befall,
But this poor Palmer knew them all.

XXIX

Lord Marmion then his boon did ask;
The Palmer took on him the task,
So he would march with morning tide,
To Scottish court to be his guide.
"But I have solemn vows to pay,
And may not linger by the way,
To fair St. Andrews bound,
Within the ocean-cave to pray,
Where good Saint Rule his holy lay,
From midnight to the dawn of day,
Sung to the billows' sound;[1]
Thence to Saint Fillan's blessed well,
Whose spring can frenzied dreams dispel,
And the crazed brain restore:[2]
Saint Mary grant, that cave or spring
Could back to peace my bosom bring,
Or bid it throb no more!"

[1] St. Regulus (*Scottice*, St. Rule), a monk of Patrae in Achaia, is said to have brought the relics of St. Andrew to Scotland in the fourth century.

[2] St. Fillan was a Scottish saint of some reputation. See *Glenfinlas*, p. 57.

XXX

And now the midnight draught of sleep,
Where wine and spices richly steep,
In massive bowl of silver deep,
The page presents on knee.
Lord Marmion drank a fair good rest,
The Captain pledged his noble guest,
The cup went through among the rest,
Who drain'd it merrily;
Alone the Palmer pass'd it by,
Though Selby press'd him courteously.
This was a sign the feast was o'er;
It hush'd the merry wassel roar,
The minstrels ceased to sound.
Soon in the Castle nought was heard,
But the slow footstep of the guard,
Pacing his sober round.

XXXI

With early dawn Lord Marmion rose:
And first the chapel doors unclose;
Then, after morning rites were done
(A hasty mass from Friar John),
And knight and squire had broke their fast
On rich substantial repast,
Lord Marmion's bugles blew to horse:
Then came the stirrup-cup in course:
Between the Baron and his host,
No point of courtesy was lost;
High thanks were by Lord Marmion paid,
Solemn excuse the Captain made,
Till, filing from the gate, had pass'd
That noble train, their Lord the last.
Then loudly rung the trumpet call;
Thunder'd the cannon from the wall,
And shook the Scottish shore;
Around the castle eddied slow,
Volumes of smoke as white as snow,
And hid its turrets hoar;
Till they roll'd forth upon the air,
And met the river breezes there,
Which gave again the prospect fair.

## Introduction to Canto Second

### To the REV. JOHN MARRIOTT, A.M.[1]

*Ashestiel, Ettrick Forest.*

The scenes are desert now, and bare,
Where flourish'd once a forest fair,[2]
When these waste glens with copse were lined,
And peopled with the hart and hind.
Yon Thorn—perchance whose prickly spears
Have fenced him for three hundred years,
While fell around his green compeers—
Yon lonely Thorn, would he could tell
The changes of his parent dell,
Since he, so grey and stubborn now,
Waved in each breeze a sapling bough;
Would he could tell how deep the shade
A thousand mingled branches made;
How broad the shadows of the oak,
How clung the rowan[3] to the rock,
And through the foliage show'd his head,
With narrow leaves and berries red;
What pines on every mountain sprung,
O'er every dell what birches hung,
In every breeze what aspens shook,
What alders shaded every brook!

"Here, in my shade," methinks he'd say,
"The mighty stag at noon-tide lay:
The wolf I've seen, a fiercer game
(The neighbouring dingle bears his name),
With lurching step around me prowl,
And stop, against the moon to howl;
The mountain-boar, on battle set,
His tusks upon my stem would whet;

[1] Mr. Marriott was tutor to one of the Buccleuch family, and a contributor to the *Border Minstrelsy*.

[2] Ettrick Forest, now a range of mountainous sheep-walks, was once reserved for the royal chase.

[3] Mountain ash.

While doe, and roe, and red-deer good,
Have bounded by, through gay green-wood.
Then oft, from Newark's riven tower,
Sallied a Scottish monarch's power:
A thousand vassals muster'd round,
With horse, and hawk, and horn, and hound;
And I might see the youth intent,
Guard every pass with crossbow bent;
And through the brake the rangers stalk,
And fale'ners hold the ready hawk;
And foresters, in green-wood trim,
Lead in the leash the gazehounds grim,
Attentive, as the bratchet's [1] bay,
From the dark covert drove the prey,
To slip them as he broke away.
The startled quarry bounds amain,
As fast the gallant greyhounds strain;
Whistles the arrow from the bow,
Answers the harquebuss below;
While all the rocking hills reply,
To hoof-clang, hound, and hunters' cry,
And bugles ringing lightsomely."

Of such proud huntings, many tales
Yet linger in our lonely dales,
Up pathless Ettrick and on Yarrow,
Where erst the outlaw drew his arrow.
But not more blithe that silvan court,
Than we have been at humbler sport;
Though small our pomp, and mean our game,
Our mirth, dear Marriott, was the same.
Remember'st thou my greyhounds true?
O'er holt or hill there never flew,
From slip or leash there never sprang,
More fleet of foot, or sure of fang.
Nor dull, between each merry chase,
Pass'd by the intermitted space;
For we had fair resource in store,
In Classic and in Gothic lore:
We mark'd each memorable scene,
And held poetic talk between;

[1] Slowhound.

Nor hill, nor brook, we paced along,
But had its legend or its song.
All silent now—for now are still
Thy bowers, untenanted Bowhill![1]
No longer, from thy mountains dun,
The yeoman hears the well-known gun,
And while his honest heart glows warm,
At thought of his paternal farm,
Round to his mates a brimmer fills,
And drinks, "The Chieftain of the Hills!"
No fairy forms, in Yarrow's bowers,
Trip o'er the walks, or tend the flowers,
Fair as the elves whom Janet saw
By moonlight dance on Carterhaugh;
No youthful Baron's left to grace
The Forest-Sheriff's lonely chase,
And ape, in manly step and tone,
The majesty of Oberon:
And she is gone, whose lovely face
Is but her least and lowest grace;[2]
Though if to Sylphid Queen 'twere given,
To show our earth the charms of Heaven,
She could not glide along the air,
With form more light, or face more fair.
No more the widow's deafen'd ear
Grows quick that lady's step to hear:
At noontide she expects her not,
Nor busies her to trim the cot;
Pensive she turns her humming wheel,
Or pensive cooks her orphans' meal;
Yet blesses, ere she deals their bread,
The gentle hand by which they're fed.

From Yair,—which hills so closely bind,*
Scarce can the Tweed his passage find,
Though much he fret, and chafe, and toil,
Till all his eddying currents boil,—
Her long-descended lord[3] is gone,

[1] A seat of the Duke of Buccleuch on the Yarrow, near the ruins of Newark.

[2] Harriet, Countess of Dalkeith, afterwards Duchess of Buccleuch.

[3] The late Alexander Pringle, Esq., of Whytbank.

And left us by the stream alone.
And much I miss those sportive boys,[1]
Companions of my mountain joys,
Just at the age 'twixt boy and youth,
When thought is speech, and speech is truth.
Close to my side, with what delight
They press'd to hear of Wallace wight,
When, pointing to his airy mound,
I call'd his ramparts holy ground![2]
Kindled their brows to hear me speak;
And I have smiled, to feel my cheek,
Despite the difference of our years,
Return again the glow of theirs.
Ah, happy boys! such feelings pure,
They will not, cannot, long endure;
Condemn'd to stem the world's rude tide,
You may not linger by the side;
For Fate shall thrust you from the shore,
And Passion ply the sail and oar.
Yet cherish the remembrance still,
Of the lone mountain, and the rill;
For trust, dear boys, the time will come,
When fiercer transport shall be dumb,
And you will think right frequently,
But, well I hope, without a sigh,
On the free hours that we have spent
Together, on the brown hill's bent.

When, musing on companions gone,
We doubly feel ourselves alone,
Something, my friend, we yet may gain;
There is a pleasure in this pain:
It soothes the love of lonely rest,
Deep in each gentler heart impress'd.
'Tis silent amid worldly toils,
And stifled soon by mental broils;
But, in a bosom thus prepared,
Its still small voice is often heard,
Whispering a mingled sentiment,
'Twixt resignation and content.

[1] The sons of Mr. Pringle of Whytbank.

[2] On a high mountainous ridge above the farm of Ashestiel is a fosse called Wallace's Trench.

Oft in my mind such thoughts awake,
By lone Saint Mary's silent lake;[1]
Thou know'st it well,—nor fen, nor sedge,
Pollute the pure lake's crystal edge; *
Abrupt and sheer, the mountains sink
At once upon the level brink;
And just a trace of silver sand
Marks where the water meets the land.
Far in the mirror, bright and blue,
Each hill's huge outline you may view;
Shaggy with heath, but lonely bare,
Nor tree, nor bush, nor brake, is there,
Save where, of land, yon slender line
Bears thwart the lake the scatter'd pine,
Yet even this nakedness has power,
And aids the feeling of the hour:
Nor thicket, dell, nor copse you spy,
Where living thing conceal'd might lie;
Nor point, retiring, hides a dell,
Where swain, or woodman lone, might dwell;
There's nothing left to fancy's guess,
You see that all is loneliness:
And silence aids—though the steep hills
Send to the lake a thousand rills;
In summer tide, so soft they weep,
The sound but lulls the ear asleep;
Your horse's hoof-tread sounds too rude,
So stilly is the solitude.

Nought living meets the eye or ear,
But well I ween the dead are near;
For though, in feudal strife, a foe
Hath laid Our Lady's chapel low,[2]
Yet still, beneath the hallow'd soil,
The peasant rests him from his toil,
And, dying, bids his bones be laid,
Where erst his simple fathers pray'd.

If age had tamed the passions' strife,
And fate had cut my ties to life,
Here, have I thought, 'twere sweet to dwell,

[1] The source of the Yarrow.
[2] A chapel near St. Mary's Lake. See the *Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

And rear again the chaplain's cell,
Like that same peaceful hermitage,
Where Milton long'd to spend his age.
'Twere sweet to mark the setting day
On Bourhope's * lonely top decay ;
And, as it faint and feeble died
On the broad lake, and mountain's side,
To say, "Thus pleasures fade away ;
Youth, talents, beauty, thus decay,
And leave us dark, forlorn, and grey" ;
Then gaze on Dryhope's ruin'd tower,
And think on Yarrow's faded Flower :
And when that mountain-sound I heard,
Which bids us be for storm prepared,
The distant rustling of his wings,
As up his force the Tempest brings,
'Twere sweet, ere yet his terrors rave,
To sit upon the Wizard's grave—
That Wizard-Priest's, whose bones are thrust
From company of holy dust ;
On which no sunbeam ever shines—
(So superstition's creed divines)—
Thence view the lake, with sullen roar,
Heave her broad billows to the shore ;
And mark the wild-swans mount the gale,
Spread wide through mist their snowy sail,
And ever stoop again, to lave
Their bosoms on the surging wave :
Then, when against the driving hail
No longer might my plaid avail,
Back to my lonely home retire,
And light my lamp, and trim my fire ;
There ponder o'er some mystic lay,
Till the wild tale had all its sway,
And, in the bittern's distant shriek,
I heard unearthly voices speak,
And thought the Wizard-Priest was come,
To claim again his ancient home !
And bade my busy fancy range,
To frame him fitting shape and strange,
Till from the task my brow I clear'd,
And smiled to think that I had fear'd.

But chief, 'twere sweet to think such life
(Though but escape from fortune's strife),
Something most matchless good and wise,
A great and grateful sacrifice;
And deem each hour to musing given,
A step upon the road to heaven.

Yet him, whose heart is ill at ease,
Such peaceful solitudes displease:
He loves to drown his bosom's jar
Amid the elemental war:
And my black Palmer's choice had been
Some ruder and more savage scene,
Like that which frowns round dark Loch-skene.[1]
There eagles scream from isle to shore;
Down all the rocks the torrents roar;
O'er the black waves incessant driven,
Dark mists infect the summer heaven;
Through the rude barriers of the lake,
Away its hurrying waters break,
Faster and whiter dash and curl,
Till down yon dark abyss they hurl.
Rises the fog-smoke white as snow,
Thunders the viewless stream below,
Diving, as if condemn'd to lave
Some demon's subterranean cave,
Who, prison'd by enchanter's spell,
Shakes the dark rock with groan and yell.
And well that Palmer's form and mien
Had suited with the stormy scene,
Just on the edge, straining his ken
To view the bottom of the den,
Where, deep deep down, and far within,
Toils with the rocks the roaring linn;
Then, issuing forth one foamy wave,
And wheeling round the Giant's Grave,
White as the snowy charger's tail,
Drives down the pass of Moffatdale.

[1] A lake at the head of Moffat Water. On the stream by which the lake discharges itself is a cataract known as the "Grey Mare's Tail."

Marriott, thy harp, on Isis strung,
To many a Border theme has rung:
Then list to me, and thou shalt know
Of this mysterious Man of Woe.

## CANTO SECOND

### The Convent

I

The breeze, which swept away the smoke,
Round Norham Castle roll'd,
When all the loud artillery spoke,
With lightning-flash, and thunder-stroke,
As Marmion left the Hold.
It curl'd not Tweed alone, that breeze,
For, far upon Northumbrian seas,
It freshly blew, and strong,
Where, from high Whitby's cloister'd pile,
Bound to St. Cuthbert's Holy Isle,
It bore a bark along.
Upon the gale she stoop'd her side,
And bounded o'er the swelling tide,
As she were dancing home;
The merry seamen laugh'd, to see
Their gallant ship so lustily
Furrow the green sea-foam.
Much joy'd they in their honour'd freight;
For, on the deck, in chair of state,
The Abbess of Saint Hilda placed,
With five fair nuns, the galley graced.

II

'Twas sweet to see these holy maids,
Like birds escaped to greenwood shades,
Their first flight from the cage,
How timid, and how curious too,
For all to them was strange and new,
And all the common sights they view,
Their wonderment engage.

One eyed the shrouds and swelling sail,
With many a benedicite;
One at the rippling surge grew pale,
And would for terror pray;
Then shriek'd, because the sea-dog, nigh,
His round black head, and sparkling eye,
Rear'd o'er the foaming spray;
And one would still adjust her veil,
Disorder'd by the summer gale,
Perchance lest some more worldly eye
Her dedicated charms might spy;
Perchance, because such action graced
Her fair-turn'd arm and slender waist.
Light was each simple bosom there,
Save two, who ill might pleasure share,—
The Abbess, and the Novice Clare.

III

The Abbess was of noble blood,
But early took the veil and hood,
Ere upon life she cast a look,
Or knew the world that she forsook.
Fair too she was, and kind had been
As she was fair, but ne'er had seen
For her a timid lover sigh,
Nor knew the influence of her eye.
Love, to her ear, was but a name,
Combined with vanity and shame;
Her hopes, her fears, her joys, were all
Bounded within the cloister wall:
The deadliest sin her mind could reach,
Was of monastic rule the breach;
And her ambition's highest aim
To emulate Saint Hilda's fame.
For this she gave her ample dower,
To raise the convent's eastern tower;
For this, with carving rare and quaint,
She deck'd the chapel of the saint,
And gave the relic-shrine of cost,
With ivory and gems emboss'd.
The poor her Convent's bounty blest,
The pilgrim in its halls found rest.

IV

Black was her garb, her rigid rule
Reform'd on Benedictine school;
Her cheek was pale, her form was spare;
Vigils, and penitence austere,
Had early quench'd the light of youth,
But gentle was the dame, in sooth;
Though, vain of her religious sway,
She loved to see her maids obey,
Yet nothing stern was she in cell,
And the nuns loved their Abbess well.
Sad was this voyage to the dame;
Summon'd to Lindisfarne, she came,
There, with Saint Cuthbert's Abbot old,
And Tynemouth's Prioress, to hold
A chapter of Saint Benedict,
For inquisition stern and strict,
On two apostates from the faith,
And, if need were, to doom to death.

V

Nought say I here of Sister Clare,
Save this, that she was young and fair;
As yet a novice unprofess'd,
Lovely and gentle, but distress'd.
She was betroth'd to one now dead,
Or worse, who had dishonour'd fled.
Her kinsmen bade her give her hand
To one who loved her for her land:
Herself, almost heart-broken now,
Was bent to take the vestal vow,
And shroud, within Saint Hilda's gloom,
Her blasted hopes and wither'd bloom.

VI

She sate upon the galley's prow,
And seem'd to mark the waves below;
Nay, seem'd, so fix'd her look and eye,
To count them as they glided by.
She saw them not—'twas seeming all—
Far other scene her thoughts recall,—

A sun-scorch'd desert, waste and bare,
Nor waves, nor breezes, murmur'd there;
There saw she, where some careless hand
O'er a dead corpse had heap'd the sand,
To hide it till the jackals come,
To tear it from the scanty tomb.——
See what a woful look was given,
As she raised up her eyes to heaven!

VII

Lovely, and gentle, and distress'd—
These charms might tame the fiercest breast:
Harpers have sung, and poets told,
That he, in fury uncontroll'd,
The shaggy monarch of the wood,
Before a virgin, fair and good,
Hath pacified his savage mood.
But passions in the human frame
Oft put the lion's rage to shame:
And jealousy, by dark intrigue,
With sordid avarice in league,
Had practised with their bowl and knife,
Against the mourner's harmless life.
This crime was charged 'gainst those who lay,
Prison'd in Cuthbert's islet grey.

VIII

And now the vessel skirts the strand
Of mountainous Northumberland;
Towns, towers, and halls, successive rise,
And catch the nuns' delighted eyes.
Monk-Wearmouth soon behind them lay,
And Tynemouth's priory and bay;
They mark'd, amid her trees, the hall
Of lofty Seaton-Delaval;
They saw the Blythe and Wansbeck floods
Rush to the sea through sounding woods;
They pass'd the tower of Widderington,
Mother of many a valiant son;
At Coquet-isle their beads they tell
To the good Saint who own'd the cell;

Then did the Alne attention claim,
And Warkworth, proud of Percy's name;
And next, they cross'd themselves, to hear
The whitening breakers sound so near,
Where, boiling through the rocks, they roar
On Dunstanborough's cavern'd shore;
Thy tower, proud Bamborough, mark'd they there,
King Ida's castle, huge and square,
From its tall rock look grimly down,
And on the swelling ocean frown;
Then from the coast they bore away,
And reach'd the Holy Island's bay.

IX

The tide did now its flood-mark gain,
And girdled in the Saint's domain:
For, with the flow and ebb, its style
Varies from continent to isle;
Dry-shod, o'er sands, twice every day,
The pilgrims to the shrine find way;
Twice every day, the waves efface
Of staves and sandall'd feet the trace.
As to the port the galley flew,
Higher and higher rose to view
The Castle with its battled walls,
The ancient Monastery's halls,
A solemn, huge, and dark-red pile,
Placed on the margin of the isle.

X

In Saxon strength that Abbey frown'd,
With massive arches broad and round,
That rose alternate, row and row,
On ponderous columns, short and low,
Built ere the art was known,
By pointed aisle, and shafted stalk,
The arcades of an alley'd walk
To emulate in stone.
On the deep walls the heathen Dane
Had pour'd his impious rage in vain;
And needful was such strength to these,
Exposed to the tempestuous seas,

Scourged by the winds' eternal sway,
Open to rovers fierce as they,
Which could twelve hundred years withstand
Winds, waves, and northern pirates' hand.
Not but that portions of the pile,
Rebuilded in a later style,
Show'd where the spoiler's hand had been;
Not but the wasting sea-breeze keen
Had worn the pillar's carving quaint,
And moulder'd in his niche the saint,
And rounded, with consuming power,
The pointed angles of each tower;
Yet still entire the Abbey stood,
Like veteran, worn, but unsubdued.

XI

Soon as they near'd his turrets strong,
The maidens raised Saint Hilda's song,
And with the sea-wave and the wind,
Their voices, sweetly shrill, combined,
And made harmonious close;
Then, answering from the sandy shore,
Half-drown'd amid the breakers' roar;
According chorus rose:
Down to the haven of the Isle,
The monks and nuns in order file,
From Cuthbert's cloisters grim;
Banner, and cross, and relics there,
To meet Saint Hilda's maids, they bare;
And, as they caught the sounds on air,
They echoed back the hymn.
The islanders, in joyous mood,
Rush'd emulously through the flood,
To hale the bark to land;
Conspicuous by her veil and hood,
Signing the cross, the Abbess stood,
And bless'd them with her hand.

XII

Suppose we now the welcome said,
Suppose the Convent banquet made:

All through the holy dome,
Through cloister, aisle, and gallery,
Wherever vestal maid might pry,
Nor risk to meet unhallow'd eye,
The stranger sisters roam:
Till fell the evening damp with dew,
And the sharp sea-breeze coldly blew,
For there, even summer night is chill.
Then, having stray'd and gazed their fill,
They closed around the fire;
And all, in turn, essay'd to paint
The rival merits of their saint,
A theme that ne'er can tire
A holy maid; for, be it known,
That their saint's honour is their own.

XIII

Then Whitby's nuns exulting told,
How to their house three Barons bold
Must menial service do;[1]
While horns blow out a note of shame,
And monks cry "Fy upon your name!
In wrath, for loss of silvan game,
Saint Hilda's priest ye slew."—
"This, on Ascension-day, each year,
While labouring on our harbour-pier,
Must Herbert, Bruce, and Percy hear."—
They told, how in their convent-cell
A Saxon princess once did dwell,
The lovely Edelfled;
And how, of thousand snakes, each one
Was changed into a coil of stone,
When holy Hilda pray'd;
Themselves, within their holy bound,
Their stony folds had often found.
They told, how sea-fowls' pinions fail,
As over Whitby's towers they sail,
And, sinking down, with flutterings faint,
They do their homage to the saint.

[1] The various boasts of the two companies of nuns are given from the legends about their respective convents and their founders.

XIV

Nor did Saint Cuthbert's daughters fail
To vie with these in holy tale;
His body's resting-place, of old,
How oft their patron changed, they told;
How, when the rude Dane burn'd their pile,
The monks fled forth from Holy Isle;
O'er northern mountain, marsh, and moor,
From sea to sea, from shore to shore,
Seven years Saint Cuthbert's corpse they bore.
They rested them in fair Melrose;
But though, alive, he loved it well,
Not there his relics might repose;
For, wondrous tale to tell!
In his stone-coffin forth he rides,
A ponderous bark for river tides,
Yet light as gossamer it glides,
Downward to Tilmouth cell.
Nor long was his abiding there,
For southward did the saint repair;
Chester-le-Street, and Rippon, saw
His holy corpse, ere Wardilaw
Hail'd him with joy and fear;
And, after many wanderings past,
He chose his lordly seat at last,
Where his cathedral, huge and vast,
Looks down upon the Wear:
There, deep in Durham's Gothic shade,
His relics are in secret laid;
But none may know the place,
Save of his holiest servants three,
Deep sworn to solemn secrecy,
Who share that wondrous grace.

XV

Who may his miracles declare!
Even Scotland's dauntless king, and heir
(Although with them they led
Galwegians, wild as ocean's gale,
And Lodon's knights, all sheathed in mail,
And the bold men of Teviotdale),
Before his standard fled.

'Twas he, to vindicate his reign,
Edged Alfred's falchion on the Dane,
And turn'd the Conqueror back again,
When, with his Norman bowyer band,
He came to waste Northumberland.

XVI

But fain Saint Hilda's nuns would learn
If, on a rock, by Lindisfarne,
Saint Cuthbert sits, and toils to frame
The sea-born beads that bear his name:
Such tales had Whitby's fishers told,
And said they might his shape behold,
And hear his anvil sound;
A deaden'd clang,—a huge dim form,
Seen but, and heard, when gathering storm
And night were closing round.
But this, as tale of idle fame,
The nuns of Lindisfarne disclaim.

XVII

While round the fire such legends go,
Far different was the scene of woe,
Where, in a secret aisle beneath,
Council was held of life and death.
It was more dark and lone that vault,
Than the worst dungeon cell:
Old Colwulf[1] built it, for his fault,
In penitence to dwell,
When he, for cowl and beads, laid down
The Saxon battle-axe and crown.
This den, which, chilling every sense
Of feeling, hearing, sight,
Was call'd the Vault of Penitence,
Excluding air and light,
Was, by the prelate Sexhelm, made
A place of burial for such dead,
As, having died in mortal sin,
Might not be laid the church within.

1 Ceolwulf, a Northumbrian king, patron of the historian Bede, abdicated about 738, and retired to Holy Island, where he died in the odour of sanctity.

'Twas now a place of punishment;
Whence if so loud a shriek were sent,
As reach'd the upper air,
The hearers bless'd themselves, and said,
The spirits of the sinful dead
Bemoan'd their torments there.

XVIII

But though, in the monastic pile,
Did of this penitential aisle
Some vague tradition go,
Few only, save the Abbot, knew
Where the place lay; and still more few
Were those, who had from him the clew
To that dread vault to go.
Victim and executioner
Were blindfold when transported there.
In low dark rounds the arches hung,
From the rude rock the side-walls sprung;
The grave-stones, rudely sculptured o'er,
Half sunk in earth, by time half wore,
Were all the pavement of the floor;
The mildew-drops fell one by one,
With tinkling plash, upon the stone.
A cresset,[1] in an iron chain,
Which served to light this drear domain,
With damp and darkness seem'd to strive,
As if it scarce might keep alive;
And yet it dimly served to show
The awful conclave met below.

XIX

There, met to doom in secrecy,
Were placed the heads of convents three:
All servants of Saint Benedict,
The statutes of whose order strict
On iron table lay;
In long black dress, on seats of stone,
Behind were these three judges shown
By the pale cresset's ray:
The Abbess of Saint Hilda's, there,

[1] Antique chandelier.

Sat for a space with visage bare,
Until, to hide her bosom's swell,
And tear-drops that for pity fell,
She closely drew her veil:
Yon shrouded figure, as I guess,
By her proud mien and flowing dress,
Is Tynemouth's haughty Prioress,
And she with awe looks pale:
And he, that Ancient Man, whose sight
Has long been quench'd by age's night,
Upon whose wrinkled brow alone,
Nor ruth, nor mercy's trace, is shown,
Whose look is hard and stern,—
Saint Cuthbert's Abbot is his style;
For sanctity call'd, through the isle,
The Saint of Lindisfarne.

XX

Before them stood a guilty pair;
But, though an equal fate they share,
Yet one alone deserves our care.
Her sex a page's dress belied;
The cloak and doublet, loosely tied,
Obscured her charms, but could not hide.
Her cap down o'er her face she drew;
And, on her doublet breast,
She tried to hide the badge of blue,
Lord Marmion's falcon crest.
But, at the Prioress' command,
A monk undid the silken band
That tied her tresses fair,
And raised the bonnet from her head,
And down her slender form they spread,
In ringlets rich and rare.
Constance de Beverley they know,
Sister profess'd of Fontevraud,
Whom the Church number'd with the dead,
For broken vows, and convent fled.

XXI

When thus her face was given to view
(Although so pallid was her hue,

It did a ghastly contrast bear
To those bright ringlets glistering fair),
Her look composed, and steady eye,
Bespoke a matchless constancy;
And there she stood so calm and pale,
That, but her breathing did not fail,
And motion slight of eye and head,
And of her bosom, warranted
That neither sense nor pulse she lacks,
You might have thought a form of wax,
Wrought to the very life, was there;
So still she was, so pale, so fair.

XXII

Her comrade was a sordid soul,
Such as does murder for a meed;
Who, but of fear, knows no control,
Because his conscience, sear'd and foul,
Feels not the import of his deed;
One, whose brute-feeling ne'er aspires
Beyond his own more brute desires.
Such tools the Tempter ever needs,
To do the savagest of deeds;
For them no vision'd terrors daunt,
Their nights no fancied spectres haunt,
One fear with them, of all most base,
The fear of death,—alone finds place.
This wretch was clad in frock and cowl,
And shamed not loud to moan and howl,
His body on the floor to dash,
And crouch, like hound beneath the lash;
While his mute partner, standing near,
Waited her doom without a tear.

XXIII

Yet well the luckless wretch might shriek,
Well might her paleness terror speak!
For there were seen in that dark wall,
Two niches, narrow, deep, and tall;—
Who enters at such grisly door,
Shall ne'er, I ween, find exit more.

In each a slender meal was laid,*
Of roots, of water, and of bread:
By each, in Benedictine dress,
Two haggard monks stood motionless;
Who, holding high a blazing torch,
Show'd the grim entrance of the porch:
Reflecting back the smoky beam,
The dark-red walls and arches gleam.
Hewn stones and cement were display'd,
And building tools in order laid.

XXIV

These executioners were chose,
As men who were with mankind foes,
And with despite and envy fired,
Into the cloister had retired;
Or who, in desperate doubt of grace,
Strove, by deep penance, to efface
Of some foul crime the stain;
For, as the vassals of her will,
Such men the Church selected still,
As either joy'd in doing ill,
Or thought more grace to gain,
If, in her cause, they wrestled down
Feelings their nature strove to own.
By strange device were they brought there,
They knew not how, nor knew not where.

XXV

And now that blind old Abbot rose,
To speak the Chapter's doom
On those the wall was to enclose,
Alive, within the tomb;
But stopp'd, because that woful Maid,
Gathering her powers, to speak essay'd.
Twice she essay'd, and twice in vain;
Her accents might no utterance gain;
Nought but imperfect murmurs slip
From her convulsed and quivering lip;
'Twixt each attempt all was so still,
You seem'd to hear a distant rill—

'Twas ocean's swells and falls;
For though this vault of sin and fear
Was to the sounding surge so near,
A tempest there you scarce could hear,
So massive were the walls.

XXVI

At length, an effort sent apart
The blood that curdled to her heart,
And light came to her eye,
And colour dawn'd upon her cheek,
A hectic and a flutter'd streak,
Like that left on the Cheviot peak,
By Autumn's stormy sky;
And when her silence broke at length,
Still as she spoke she gather'd strength,
And arm'd herself to bear.
It was a fearful sight to see
Such high resolve and constancy,
In form so soft and fair.

XXVII

"I speak not to implore your grace,
Well know I, for one minute's space
Successless might I sue:
Nor do I speak your prayers to gain;
For if a death of lingering pain,
To cleanse my sins, be penance vain,
Vain are your masses too.—
I listen'd to a traitor's tale,
I left the convent and the veil;
For three long years I bow'd my pride,
A horse-boy in his train to ride;
And well my folly's meed he gave,
Who forfeited, to be his slave,
All here, and all beyond the grave.—
He saw young Clara's face more fair,
He knew her of broad lands the heir,
Forgot his vows, his faith forswore,
And Constance was beloved no more.—
'Tis an old tale, and often told;

But did my fate and wish agree,
Ne'er had been read, in story old,
Of maiden true betray'd for gold,
That loved, or was avenged, like me.

XXVIII

"The King approved his favourite's aim;
In vain a rival barr'd his claim,
Whose fate with Clare's was plight,
For he attaints that rival's fame
With treason's charge—and on they came,
In mortal lists to fight.
Their oaths are said,
Their prayers are pray'd,
Their lances in the rest are laid,
They meet in mortal shock;
And, hark! the throng, with thundering cry,
Shout 'Marmion! Marmion! to the sky,
De Wilton to the block!'
Say ye, who preach Heaven shall decide
When in the lists two champions ride,
Say, was Heaven's justice here?
When, loyal in his love and faith,
Wilton found overthrow or death,
Beneath a traitor's spear?
How false the charge, how true he fell,
This guilty packet best can tell."—
Then drew a packet from her breast,
Paused, gather'd voice, and spoke the rest.—

XXIX

"Still was false Marmion's bridal staid;
To Whitby's convent fled the maid,
The hated match to shun.
'Ho! shifts she thus?' King Henry cried;
'Sir Marmion, she shall be thy bride,
If she were sworn a nun.'
One way remain'd—the King's command
Sent Marmion to the Scottish land:
I linger'd here, and rescue plann'd
For Clara and for me:
This caitiff Monk, for gold, did swear,

He would to Whitby's shrine repair,
And, by his drugs, my rival fair
A saint in heaven should be.
But ill the dastard kept his oath,
Whose cowardice has undone us both.

XXX

"And now my tongue the secret tells,
Not that remorse my bosom swells,
But to assure my soul that none
Shall ever wed with Marmion.
Had fortune my last hope betray'd,
This packet, to the King convey'd,
Had given him to the headsman's stroke,
Although my heart that instant broke.—
Now, men of death, work forth your will,
For I can suffer, and be still;
And come he slow, or come he fast,
It is but Death who comes at last.

XXXI

"Yet dread me, from my living tomb,
Ye vassal slaves of bloody Rome!
If Marmion's late remorse should wake,
Full soon such vengeance will he take,
That you shall wish the fiery Dane
Had rather been your guest again.
Behind, a darker hour ascends!
The altars quake, the crosier bends,
The ire of a despotic King
Rides forth upon destruction's wing;
Then shall these vaults, so strong and deep,
Burst open to the sea-winds' sweep;
Some traveller then shall find my bones
Whitening amid disjointed stones,
And, ignorant of priests' cruelty,
Marvel such relics here should be."

XXXII

Fix'd was her look, and stern her air:
Back from her shoulders stream'd her hair;
The locks, that wont her brow to shade,
Stared up erectly from her head;

Her figure seem'd to rise more high;
Her voice, despair's wild energy
Had given a tone of prophecy.
Appall'd the astonish'd conclave sate;
With stupid eyes, the men of fate
Gazed on the light inspired form,
And listen'd for the avenging storm;
The judges felt the victim's dread;
No hand was moved, no word was said,
Till thus the Abbot's doom was given,
Raising his sightless balls to heaven:—
"Sister, let thy sorrows cease;
Sinful brother, part in peace!"[1]
From that dire dungeon, place of doom,
Of execution too, and tomb,
Paced forth the judges three;
Sorrow it were, and shame, to tell
The butcher-work that there befell,
When they had glided from the cell
Of sin and misery.

XXXIII

An hundred winding steps convey
That conclave to the upper day;
But, ere they breathed the fresher air,
They heard the shriekings of despair,
And many a stifled groan:
With speed their upward way they take
(Such speed as age and fear can make),
And cross'd themselves for terror's sake,
As hurrying, tottering on:
Even in the vesper's heavenly tone,
They seem'd to hear a dying groan,
And bade the passing knell to toll
For welfare of a parting soul.
Slow o'er the midnight wave it swung,
Northumbrian rocks in answer rung;
To Warkworth cell the echoes roll'd,
His beads the wakeful hermit told,

[1] A translation of *Vade in pace*. It was suggested by the Edinburgh Reviewer (Jeffrey) that the proper reading is *Vade in pacem*, not *part in peace*, but *go into peace* or into eternal rest.

The Bamborough peasant raised his head,
But slept ere half a prayer he said;
So far was heard the mighty knell,
The stag sprung up on Cheviot Fell,
Spread his broad nostril to the wind,
Listed before, aside, behind,
Then couch'd him down beside the hind,
And quaked among the mountain fern,
To hear that sound, so dull and stern.

## Introduction to Canto Third

### To WILLIAM ERSKINE, Esq.[1]

*Ashestiel, Ettrick Forest.*

Like April morning clouds, that pass,
With varying shadow, o'er the grass,
And imitate, on field and furrow,
Life's chequer'd scene of joy and sorrow;
Like streamlet of the mountain north,
Now in a torrent racing forth,
Now winding slow its silver train,
And almost slumbering on the plain;
Like breezes of the Autumn day,
Whose voice inconstant dies away,
And ever swells again as fast,
When the ear deems its murmur past;
Thus various, my romantic theme
Flits, winds, or sinks, a morning dream.
Yet pleased, our eye pursues the trace
Of Light and Shade's inconstant race;
Pleased, views the rivulet afar,
Weaving its maze irregular;
And pleased, we listen as the breeze
Heaves its wild sigh through Autumn trees;

[1] Erskine was from early youth the most intimate of the poet's friends, and his chief confidant and adviser in all literary matters. They were called to the Bar on the same day. Erskine, while always interested in literature, stuck more closely to his profession, and became a Judge of the Court of Session under the title of Lord Kinnedder. In this introduction Scott justifies himself for his adherence to the romantic style.

Then, wild as cloud, or stream, or gale,
Flow on, flow unconfined, my Tale!

Need I to thee, dear Erskine, tell
I love the license all too well,
In sounds now lowly, and now strong,
To raise the desultory song?—
Oft, when 'mid such capricious chime,
Some transient fit of lofty rhyme
To thy kind judgment seem'd excuse
For many an error of the muse,
Oft hast thou said, "If, still mis-spent,
Thine hours to poetry are lent,
Go, and to tame thy wandering course,
Quaff from the fountain at the source;
Approach those masters, o'er whose tomb
Immortal laurels ever bloom:
Instructive of the feebler bard,
Still from the grave their voice is heard;
From them, and from the paths they show'd,
Choose honour'd guide and practised road;
Nor ramble on through brake and maze,
With harpers rude of barbarous days.

"Or deem'st thou not our later time
Yields topic meet for classic rhyme?
Hast thou no elegiac verse
For Brunswick's venerable hearse?
What! not a line, a tear, a sigh,
When valour bleeds for liberty?—
Oh, hero of that glorious time,
When, with unrivall'd light sublime,—
Though martial Austria, and though all
The might of Russia, and the Gaul,
Though banded Europe stood her foes—
The star of Brandenburgh arose!
Thou couldst not live to see her beam
For ever quench'd in Jena's stream.
Lamented Chief!—it was not given
To thee to change the doom of Heaven,
And crush that dragon in its birth,
Predestined scourge of guilty earth.

Lamented Chief!—not thine the power
To save in that presumptuous hour,
When Prussia hurried to the field,
And snatch'd the spear, but left the shield!
Valour and skill 'twas thine to try,
And, tried in vain, 'twas thine to die.
Ill had it seem'd thy silver hair
The last, the bitterest pang to share,
For princedoms reft, and scutcheons riven,
And birthrights to usurpers given;
Thy land's, thy children's wrongs to feel,
And witness woes thou couldst not heal!
On thee relenting Heaven bestows
For honour'd life an honour'd close;
And when revolves, in time's sure change,
The hour of Germany's revenge,
When, breathing fury for her sake,
Some new Arminius shall awake,
Her champion, ere he strike, shall come
To whet his sword on BRUNSWICK'S tomb.

"Or of the Red-Cross hero[1] teach,
Dauntless in dungeon as on breach:
Alike to him the sea, the shore,
The brand, the bridle, or the oar:
Alike to him the war that calls
Its votaries to the shatter'd walls,
Which the grim Turk, besmear'd with blood,
Against the Invincible made good;
Or that, whose thundering voice could wake
The silence of the polar lake,
When stubborn Russ, and metal'd Swede,
On the warp'd wave their death-game play'd;
Or that, where Vengeance and Affright
Howl'd round the father of the fight,
Who snatch'd, on Alexandria's sand,
The conqueror's wreath with dying hand.[2]

"Or, if to touch such chord be thine,
Restore the ancient tragic line,
And emulate the notes that rung
From the wild harp, which silent hung

[1] Sir Sidney Smith. [2] Sir Ralph Abercromby.

By silver Avon's holy shore,
Till twice an hundred years roll'd o'er;
When she, the bold enchantress,[1] came,
With fearless hand and heart on flame!
From the pale willow snatch'd the treasure,
And swept it with a kindred measure,
Till Avon's swans, while rung the grove
With Montfort's hate and Basil's love,
Awakening at the inspired strain,
Deem'd their own Shakspeare lived again."

Thy friendship thus thy judgment wronging,
With praises not to me belonging,
In task more meet for mightiest powers,
Wouldst thou engage my thriftless hours.
But say, my Erskine, hast thou weigh'd
That secret power by all obey'd,
Which warps not less the passive mind,
Its source conceal'd, or undefined;
Whether an impulse, that has birth
Soon as the infant wakes on earth,
One with our feelings and our powers,
And rather part of us than ours;
Or whether fitlier term'd the sway
Of habit, form'd in early day?
Howe'er derived, its force confest
Rules with despotic sway the breast,
And drags us on by viewless chain,
While taste and reason plead in vain.
Look east, and ask the Belgian why,
Beneath Batavia's sultry sky,
He seeks not eager to inhale
The freshness of the mountain gale,
Content to rear his whiten'd wall
Beside the dank and dull canal?
He'll say, from youth he loved to see
The white sail gliding by the tree.
Or see yon weather-beaten hind,
Whose sluggish herds before him wind,
Whose tatter'd plaid and rugged cheek
His northern clime and kindred speak;

[1] Joanna Baillie.

Through England's laughing meads he goes,
And England's wealth around him flows;
Ask, if it would content him well,
At ease in those gay plains to dwell,
Where hedge-rows spread a verdant screen,
And spires and forests intervene,
And the neat cottage peeps between?
No! not for these will he exchange
His dark Lochaber's boundless range:
Not for fair Devon's meads forsake
Bennevis grey, and Garry's lake.

Thus while I ape the measure wild
Of tales that charm'd me yet a child,
Rude though they be, still with the chime
Return the thoughts of early time;
And feelings, roused in life's first day,
Glow in the line, and prompt the lay.
Then rise those crags, that mountain tower,
Which charm'd my fancy's wakening hour.
Though no broad river swept along,
To claim, perchance, heroic song;
Though sigh'd no groves in summer gale,
To prompt of love a softer tale;
Though scarce a puny streamlet's speed
Claim'd homage from a shepherd's reed;
Yet was poetic impulse given,
By the green hill and clear blue heaven.
It was a barren scene, and wild,
Where naked cliffs were rudely piled;
But ever and anon between
Lay velvet tufts of loveliest green;
And well the lonely infant knew
Recesses where the wall-flower grew,
And honeysuckle loved to crawl
Up the low crag and ruin'd wall.
I deem'd such nooks the sweetest shade
The sun in all its round survey'd;
And still I thought that shatter'd tower
The mightiest work of human power;
And marvell'd as the aged hind
With some strange tale bewitch'd my mind,

Of forayers, who, with headlong force,
Down from that strength had spurr'd their horse,
Their southern rapine to renew,
Far in the distant Cheviots blue,
And, home returning, fill'd the hall
With revel, wassel-rout, and brawl.
Methought that still, with trump and clang,
The gateway's broken arches rang;
Methought grim features, seam'd with scars,
Glared through the window's rusty bars,
And ever, by the winter hearth,
Old tales I heard of woe or mirth,
Of lovers' slights, of ladies' charms,
Of witches' spells, of warriors' arms;
Of patriot battles, won of old
By Wallace wight and Bruce the bold;
Of later fields of feud and fight,
When, pouring from their Highland height,
The Scottish clans, in headlong sway,
Had swept the scarlet ranks away.
While stretch'd at length upon the floor,
Again I fought each combat o'er,
Pebbles and shells, in order laid,
The mimic ranks of war display'd;
And onward still the Scottish Lion bore,
And still the scatter'd Southron fled before.

Still, with vain fondness, could I trace,
Anew, each kind familiar face,
That brighten'd at our evening fire!
From the thatch'd mansion's grey-hair'd Sire,
Wise without learning, plain and good,
And sprung of Scotland's gentler blood;
Whose eye, in age, quick, clear, and keen,
Show'd what in youth its glance had been;
Whose doom discording neighbours sought,
Content with equity unbought;
To him the venerable Priest,
Our frequent and familiar guest,
Whose life and manners well could paint
Alike the student and the saint;
Alas! whose speech too oft I broke

With gambol rude and timeless joke
For I was wayward, bold, and wild,
A self-will'd imp, a grandame's child;
But half a plague, and half a jest,
Was still endured, beloved, caress'd.

For me, thus nurtured, dost thou ask
The classic poet's well-conn'd task?
Nay, Erskine, nay—On the wild hill
Let the wild heath-bell flourish still;
Cherish the tulip, prune the vine,
But freely let the woodbine twine,
And leave untrimm'd the eglantine:
Nay, my friend, nay—Since oft thy praise
Hath given fresh vigour to my lays;
Since oft thy judgment could refine
My flatten'd thought, or cumbrous line;
Still kind, as is thy wont, attend,
And in the minstrel spare the friend.
Though wild as cloud, as stream, as gale,
Flow forth, flow unrestrain'd, my Tale!

## CANTO THIRD

### The Hostel, or Inn

I

The livelong day Lord Marmion rode:
The mountain path the Palmer show'd,
By glen and streamlet winded still,
Where stunted birches hid the rill.
They might not choose the lowland road,[1]
For the Merse forayers were abroad,
Who, fired with hate and thirst of prey,
Had scarcely fail'd to bar their way.
Oft on the trampling band, from crown
Of some tall cliff, the deer look'd down;

[1] Scott said in banter that his reason for bringing Marmion over the Lammermoors, and so to Edinburgh, was that the route afforded better opportunities for description; but he does not omit to give here a sufficient reason for Marmion's choice.

On wing of jet, from his repose
In the deep heath, the black-cock rose;
Sprung from the gorse the timid roe,
Nor waited for the bending bow;
And when the stony path began,
By which the naked peak they wan,
Up flew the snowy ptarmigan.
The noon had long been pass'd before
They gain'd the height of Lammermoor;
Thence winding down the northern way,
Before them, at the close of day,
Old Gifford's [1] towers and hamlet lay.

II

No summons calls them to the tower,
To spend the hospitable hour.
To Scotland's camp the Lord was gone;
His cautious dame, in bower alone,
Dreaded her castle to unclose,
So late, to unknown friends or foes.
On through the hamlet as they paced,
Before a porch, whose front was graced
With bush and flagon trimly placed,
Lord Marmion drew his rein:
The village inn seem'd large, though rude;
Its cheerful fire and hearty food
Might well relieve his train.
Down from their seats the horsemen sprung,
With jingling spurs the court-yard rung;
They bind their horses to the stall,
For forage, food, and firing call,
And various clamour fills the hall:
Weighing the labour with the cost,
Toils everywhere the bustling host.

III

Soon, by the chimney's merry blaze,
Through the rude hostel might you gaze;
Might see, where, in dark nook aloof,
The rafters of the sooty roof
Bore wealth of winter cheer;

[1] A village about four miles from Haddington.

Of sea-fowl dried, and solands store,
And gammons of the tusky boar,
And savoury haunch of deer.
The chimney arch projected wide;
Above, around it, and beside,
Were tools for housewives' hand;
Nor wanted, in that martial day,
The implements of Scottish fray,
The buckler, lance, and brand.
Beneath its shade, the place of state,
On oaken settle Marmion sate,
And view'd around the blazing hearth,
His followers mix in noisy mirth;
Whom with brown ale, in jolly tide,
From ancient vessels ranged aside,
Full actively their host supplied.

IV

Theirs was the glee of martial breast,
And laughter theirs at little jest;
And oft Lord Marmion deigned to aid,
And mingle in the mirth they made;
For though, with men of high degree,
The proudest of the proud was he,
Yet, train'd in camps, he knew the art
To win the soldier's hardy heart.
They love a captain to obey,
Boisterous as March, yet fresh as May;
With open hand, and brow as free,
Lover of wine and minstrelsy;
Ever the first to scale a tower,
As venturous in a lady's bower:—
Such buxom chief shall lead his host
From India's fires to Zembla's frost.

V

Resting upon his pilgrim staff,
Right opposite the Palmer stood;
His thin dark visage seen but half,
Half hidden by his hood.
Still fix'd on Marmion was his look,
Which he, who ill such gaze could brook,

Strove by a frown to quell ;
But not for that, though more than once
Full met their stern encountering glance,
The Palmer's visage fell.

VI

By fits less frequent from the crowd
Was heard the burst of laughter loud ;
For still, as squire and archer stared
On that dark face and matted beard,
Their glee and game declined.
All gazed at length in silence drear,
Unbroke, save when in comrade's ear
Some yeoman, wondering in his fear,
Thus whisper'd forth his mind :—
" Saint Mary ! saw'st thou e'er such sight ?
How pale his cheek, his eye how bright,
Whene'er the fire-brand's fickle light
Glances beneath his cowl !
Full on our Lord he sets his eye ;
For his best palfrey, would not I
Endure that sullen scowl."

VII

But Marmion, as to chase the awe
Which thus had quell'd their hearts, who saw
The ever-varying fire-light show
That figure stern and face of woe,
Now call'd upon a squire :—
" Fitz-Eustace, know'st thou not some lay,
To speed the lingering night away ?
We slumber by the fire."—

VIII

" So please you," thus the youth rejoin'd,
" Our choicest minstrel's left behind.
Ill may we hope to please your ear,
Accustom'd Constant's strains to hear.
The harp full deftly can he strike,
And wake the lover's lute alike ;
To dear Saint Valentine, no thrush
Sings livelier from a spring-tide bush,

No nightingale her love-lorn tune
More sweetly warbles to the moon.
Woe to the cause, whate'er it be,
Detains from us his melody,
Lavish'd on rocks, and billows stern,
Or duller monks of Lindisfarne.
Now must I venture, as I may,
To sing his favourite roundelay."

IX

A mellow voice Fitz-Eustace had,
The air he chose was wild and sad;
Such have I heard, in Scottish land,
Rise from the busy harvest band,
When falls before the mountaineer,
On Lowland plains, the ripen'd ear.
Now one shrill voice the notes prolong,
Now a wild chorus swells the song:
Oft have I listen'd, and stood still,
As it came soften'd up the hill,
And deem'd it the lament of men
Who languish'd for their native glen;
And thought how sad would be such sound
On Susquehana's swampy ground,
Kentucky's wood-encumber'd brake,
Or wild Ontario's boundless lake,
Where heart-sick exiles, in the strain,
Recall'd fair Scotland's hills again!

X

Song

Where shall the lover rest,
Whom the fates sever
From his true maiden's breast,
Parted for ever?
Where, through groves deep and high,
Sounds the far billow,
Where early violets die,
Under the willow.

CHORUS

*Eleu loro*, etc. Soft shall be his pillow.

There, through the summer day,
Cool streams are laving;
There, while the tempests sway,
Scarce are boughs waving;
There, thy rest shalt thou take,
Parted for ever,
Never again to wake,
Never, O never!

CHORUS

*Eleu loro*, etc. Never, O never!

XI

Where shall the traitor rest,
He, the deceiver,
Who could win maiden's breast,
Ruin, and leave her?
In the lost battle,
Borne down by the flying,
Where mingles war's rattle
With groans of the dying.

CHORUS

*Eleu loro*, etc. There shall he be lying.

Her wing shall the eagle flap
O'er the false-hearted;
His warm blood the wolf shall lap,
Ere life be parted.
Shame and dishonour sit
By his grave ever;
Blessing shall hallow it,—
Never, O never!

CHORUS

*Eleu loro*, etc. Never, O never!

XII

It ceased, the melancholy sound;
And silence sunk on all around.
The air was sad; but sadder still
It fell on Marmion's ear,
And plain'd as if disgrace and ill,
And shameful death, were near.

He drew his mantle past his face,
Between it and the band,
And rested with his head a space,
Reclining on his hand.
His thoughts I scan not; but I ween,
That, could their import have been seen,
The meanest groom in all the hall,
That e'er tied courser to a stall,
Would scarce have wish'd to be their prey,
For Lutterward and Fontenaye.

XIII

High minds, of native pride and force,
Most deeply feel thy pangs, Remorse!
Fear, for their scourge, mean villains have,
Thou art the torturer of the brave!
Yet fatal strength they boast to steel
Their minds to bear the wounds they feel,
Even while they writhe beneath the smart
Of civil conflict in the heart.
For soon Lord Marmion raised his head,
And, smiling, to Fitz-Eustace said—
"Is it not strange, that, as ye sung,
Seem'd in mine ear a death-peal rung,
Such as in nunneries they toll
For some departing sister's soul?
Say, what may this portend?"—
Then first the Palmer silence broke
(The livelong day he had not spoke),
"The death of a dear friend."

XIV

Marmion, whose steady heart and eye
Ne'er changed in worst extremity;
Marmion, whose soul could scantly brook,
Even from his King, a haughty look;
Whose accent of command controll'd,
In camps, the boldest of the bold—
Thought, look, and utterance fail'd him now,
Fall'n was his glance, and flush'd his brow:
For either in the tone,
Or something in the Palmer's look,

So full upon his conscience strook,
That answer he found none.
Thus oft it haps, that when within
They shrink at sense of secret sin,
A feather daunts the brave;
A fool's wild speech confounds the wise,
And proudest princes veil their eyes
Before their meanest slave.

XV

Well might he falter!—By his aid
Was Constance Beverley betray'd.
Not that he augur'd of the doom,
Which on the living closed the tomb:
But, tired to hear the desperate maid
Threaten by turns, beseech, upbraid;
And wroth, because, in wild despair,
She practised on the life of Clare;
Its fugitive the Church he gave,
Though not a victim, but a slave;
And deem'd restraint in convent strange
Would hide her wrongs, and her revenge.
Himself, proud Henry's favourite peer,
Held Romish thunders idle fear;
Secure his pardon he might hold,
For some slight mulct of penance-gold.
Thus judging, he gave secret way,
When the stern priests surprised their prey.
His train but deem'd the favourite page
Was left behind, to spare his age;
Or other if they deem'd, none dared
To mutter what he thought and heard.
Woe to the vassal, who durst pry
Into Lord Marmion's privacy!

XVI

His conscience slept—he deem'd her well,
And safe secured in distant cell;
But, waken'd by her favourite lay,
And that strange Palmer's boding say,
That fell so ominous and drear,
Full on the object of his fear,

To aid remorse's venom'd throes,
Dark tales of convent-vengeance rose;
And Constance, late betray'd and scorn'd,
All lovely on his soul return'd;
Lovely as when, at treacherous call,
She left her convent's peaceful wall,
Crimson'd with shame, with terror mute,
Dreading alike escape, pursuit,
Till love, victorious o'er alarms,
Hid fears and blushes in his arms.

XVII

"Alas!" he thought, "how changed that mien!
How changed these timid looks have been,
Since years of guilt, and of disguise,
Have steel'd her brow, and arm'd her eyes!
No more of virgin terror speaks
The blood that mantles in her cheeks;
Fierce, and unfeminine, are there,
Frenzy for joy, for grief despair;
And I the cause—for whom were given
Her peace on earth, her hopes in heaven!—
Would," thought he, as the picture grows,
"I on its stalk had left the rose!
Oh, why should man's success remove
The very charms that wake his love!—
Her convent's peaceful solitude
Is now a prison harsh and rude;
And, pent within the narrow cell,
How will her spirit chafe and swell!
How brook the stern monastic laws!
The penance how—and I the cause!—
Vigil and scourge—perchance even worse!"—
And twice he rose to cry, "To horse!"
And twice his Sovereign's mandate came,
Like damp upon a kindling flame;
And twice he thought, "Gave I not charge
She should be safe, though not at large?
They durst not, for their island, shred
One golden ringlet from her head."

XVIII

While thus in Marmion's bosom strove
Repentance and reviving love,
Like whirlwinds, whose contending sway
I've seen Loch Vennachar obey,
Their Host the Palmer's speech had heard,
And, talkative, took up the word:
"Ay, reverend Pilgrim, you, who stray
From Scotland's simple land away,
To visit realms afar,
Full often learn the art to know
Of future weal, or future woe,
By word, or sign, or star;
Yet might a knight his fortune hear
If, knight-like, he despises fear,
Not far from hence;—if fathers old
Aright our hamlet legend told."—
These broken words the menials move
(For marvels still the vulgar love),
And, Marmion giving license cold,
His tale the Host thus gladly told:—

XIX

The Host's Tale

"A Clerk could tell what years have flown
Since Alexander fill'd our throne
(Third monarch of that warlike name),
And eke the time when here he came
To seek Sir Hugo, then our lord:
A braver never drew a sword;
A wiser never, at the hour
Of midnight, spoke the word of power:
The same, whom ancient records call
The founder of the Goblin-Hall.
I would, Sir Knight, your longer stay
Gave you that cavern to survey.
Of lofty roof, and ample size,
Beneath the castle deep it lies:
To hew the living rock profound,
The floor to pave, the arch to round,

There never toil'd a mortal arm—
It all was wrought by word and charm;
And I have heard my grandsire say,
That the wild clamour and affray
Of those dread artisans of hell,
Who labour'd under Hugo's spell,
Sounded as loud as ocean's war
Among the caverns of Dunbar.

XX

"The King Lord Gifford's castle sought,
Deep labouring with uncertain thought;
Even then he muster'd all his host,
To meet upon the western coast:
For Norse and Danish galleys plied
Their oars within the Frith of Clyde.
There floated Haco's banner trim,[1]
Above Norweyan warriors grim,
Savage of heart, and large of limb;
Threatening both continent and isle,
Bute, Arran, Cunninghame, and Kyle.
Lord Gifford, deep beneath the ground,
Heard Alexander's bugle sound,
And tarried not his garb to change,
But, in his wizard habit strange,
Came forth,—a quaint and fearful sight;
His mantle lined with fox-skins white;
His high and wrinkled forehead bore
A pointed cap, such as of yore
Clerks say that Pharaoh's Magi wore:
His shoes were mark'd with cross and spell,
Upon his breast a pentacle;[2]
His zone, of virgin parchment thin,
Or, as some tell, of dead man's skin,
Bore many a planetary sign,
Combust, and retrograde, and trine;
And in his hand he held prepared,
A naked sword without a guard.

[1] Haco of Norway, in a descent upon the Firth of Clyde, was defeated by Alexander III. at Largs, in Ayrshire.

[2] A pentacle is a piece of fine linen, folded with five corners, according to the five senses, and suitably inscribed with characters.

XXI

"Dire dealings with the fiendish race
Had mark'd strange lines upon his face;
Vigil and fast had worn him grim,
His eyesight dazzled seem'd and dim,
As one unused to upper day;
Even his own menials with dismay
Beheld, Sir Knight, the grisly Sire,
In his unwonted wild attire;
Unwonted, for traditions run,
He seldom thus beheld the sun.—
'I know,' he said—(his voice was hoarse,
And broken seem'd its hollow force)—
'I know the cause, although untold,
Why the King seeks his vassal's hold:
Vainly from me my liege would know
His kingdom's future weal or woe;
But yet, if strong his arm and heart,
His courage may do more than art.

XXII

"'Of middle air the demons proud,
Who ride upon the racking cloud,
Can read, in fix'd or wandering star,
The issue of events afar;
But still their sullen aid withhold,
Save when by mightier force controll'd.
Such late I summon'd to my hall;
And though so potent was the call,
That scarce the deepest nook of hell
I deem'd a refuge from the spell,
Yet, obstinate in silence still,
The haughty demon mocks my skill.
But thou,—who little know'st thy might,
As born upon that blessed night[1]
When yawning graves, and dying groan,
Proclaim'd hell's empire overthrown,—
With untaught valour shalt compel
Response denied to magic spell.'—

[1] It is a popular article of faith that those born on Christmas or Good Friday have the power of seeing spirits, and even of commanding them.

'Gramercy,' quoth our Monarch free,
'Place him but front to front with me,
And, by this good and honour'd brand,
The gift of Cœur-de-Lion's hand,
Soothly I swear, that, tide what tide,
The demon shall a buffet bide.'—
His bearing bold the wizard view'd,
And thus, well pleased, his speech renew'd:—
'There spoke the blood of Malcolm!—mark:
Forth pacing hence, at midnight dark,
The rampart seek, whose circling crown
Crests the ascent of yonder down:
A southern entrance shalt thou find;
There halt, and there thy bugle wind,
And trust thine elfin foe to see,
In guise of thy worst enemy:
Couch then thy lance, and spur thy steed—
Upon him! and Saint George to speed!
If he go down, thou soon shalt know
Whate'er these airy sprites can show;—
If thy heart fail thee in the strife,
I am no warrant for thy life.'

XXIII

"Soon as the midnight bell did ring,
Alone, and arm'd, forth rode the King
To that old camp's deserted round:
Sir Knight, you well might mark the mound,
Left-hand the town,—the Pictish race,
The trench, long since, in blood did trace;
The moor around is brown and bare,
The space within is green and fair.
The spot our village children know,
For there the earliest wild-flowers grow;
But woe betide the wandering wight,
That treads its circle in the night!
The breadth across, a bowshot clear,
Gives ample space for full career:
Opposed to the four points of heaven,
By four deep gaps are entrance given.
The southernmost our Monarch past,
Halted, and blew a gallant blast;

And on the north, within the ring,
Appear'd the form of England's King,
Who then, a thousand leagues afar,
In Palestine waged holy war:
Yet arms like England's did he wield,
Alike the leopards in the shield,
Alike his Syrian courser's frame,
The rider's length of limb the same:
Long afterwards did Scotland know,
Fell Edward [1] was her deadliest foe.

XXIV

"The vision made our Monarch start,
But soon he mann'd his noble heart,
And in the first career they ran,
The Elfin Knight fell, horse and man;
Yet did a splinter of his lance
Through Alexander's visor glance,
And razed the skin—a puny wound.
The King, light leaping to the ground,
With naked blade his phantom foe
Compell'd the future war to show.
Of Largs he saw the glorious plain,
Where still gigantic bones remain,
Memorial of the Danish war;
Himself he saw, amid the field,
On high his brandish'd war-axe wield,
And strike proud Haco from his car,
While all around the shadowy Kings
Denmark's grim ravens cower'd their wings.
'Tis said, that, in that awful night,
Remoter visions met his sight,
Foreshowing future conquests far,
When our sons' sons wage northern war;
A royal city, tower and spire,
Redden'd the midnight sky with fire,
And shouting crews her navy bore,
Triumphant, to the victor shore.[2]
Such signs may learned clerks explain,
They pass the wit of simple swain.

1 Edward I., surnamed Longshanks.

2 Allusion to the battle of Copenhagen, and the capture of the Danish navy by Nelson.

XXV

"The joyful King turn'd home again,
Headed his host, and quell'd the Dane;
But yearly, when return'd the night
Of his strange combat with the sprite,
His wound must bleed and smart;
Lord Gifford then would gibing say,
'Bold as ye were, my liege, ye pay
The penance of your start.'
Long since, beneath Dunfermline's nave,
King Alexander fills his grave,
Our Lady give him rest!
Yet still the knightly spear and shield
The Elfin Warrior doth wield,
Upon the brown hill's breast;[1]
And many a knight hath proved his chance
In the charm'd ring to break a lance,
But all have foully sped;
Save two, as legends tell, and they
Were Wallace wight, and Gilbert Hay.—
Gentles, my tale is said."

XXVI

The quaighs *[2] were deep, the liquor strong,
And on the tale the yeoman-throng
Had made a comment sage and long,
But Marmion gave a sign:
And, with their lord, the squires retire;
The rest around the hostel fire,
Their drowsy limbs recline:
For pillow, underneath each head,
The quiver and the targe were laid.
Deep slumbering on the hostel floor,
Oppress'd with toil and ale, they snore:
The dying flame, in fitful change,
Threw on the group its shadows strange.

XXVII

Apart, and nestling in the hay
Of a waste loft, Fitz-Eustace lay;

[1] There is a similar legend about Wandlebury Camp, near Cambridge.
[2] A wooden cup composed of staves hooped together.

Scarce, by the pale moonlight, were seen
The foldings of his mantle green:
Lightly he dreamt, as youth will dream,
Of sport by thicket, or by stream,
Of hawk or hound, of ring or glove,
Or, lighter yet, of lady's love.
A cautious tread his slumber broke,
And, close beside him, when he woke,
In moonbeam half, and half in gloom,
Stood a tall form, with nodding plume;
But, ere his dagger Eustace drew,
His master Marmion's voice he knew.

XXVIII

"Fitz-Eustace! rise,—I cannot rest;—
Yon churl's wild legend haunts my breast,
And graver thoughts have chafed my mood:
The air must cool my feverish blood;
And fain would I ride forth, to see
The scene of elfin chivalry.
Arise, and saddle me my steed;
And, gentle Eustace, take good heed
Thou dost not rouse these drowsy slaves;
I would not that the prating knaves
Had cause for saying, o'er their ale,
That I could credit such a tale."—
Then softly down the steps they slid,
Eustace the stable door undid,
And, darkling, Marmion's steed array'd,
While, whispering, thus the Baron said:—

XXIX

"Didst never, good my youth, hear tell,
That on the hour when I was born,
Saint George, who graced my sire's chapelle,
Down from his steed of marble fell,
A weary wight forlorn?
The flattering chaplains all agree,
The champion left his steed to me.
I would, the omen's truth to show,
That I could meet this Elfin Foe!

Blithe would I battle, for the right
To ask one question at the sprite :—
Vain thought! for elves, if elves there be,
An empty race, by fount or sea,
To dashing waters dance and sing,
Or round the green oak wheel their ring."
Thus speaking, he his steed bestrode,
And from the hostel slowly rode.

XXX

Fitz-Eustace follow'd him abroad,
And mark'd him pace the village road,
And listen'd to his horse's tramp,
Till, by the lessening sound,
He judged that of the Pictish camp
Lord Marmion sought the round.
Wonder it seem'd, in the squire's eyes,
That one, so wary held, and wise,—
Of whom 'twas said, he scarce received
For gospel, what the Church believed,—
Should, stirr'd by idle tale,
Ride forth in silence of the night,
As hoping half to meet a sprite,
Array'd in plate and mail.
For little did Fitz-Eustace know,
That passions, in contending flow,
Unfix the strongest mind;
Wearied from doubt to doubt to flee,
We welcome fond credulity,
Guide confident, though blind.

XXXI

Little for this Fitz-Eustace cared,
But, patient, waited till he heard,
At distance, prick'd to utmost speed,
The foot-tramp of a flying steed,
Come townward rushing on;
First, dead, as if on turf it trode,
Then, clattering on the village road,—
In other pace than forth he yode,[1]
Return'd Lord Marmion.

[1] *Yode*, used by old poets for *went*.

Down hastily he sprung from selle,
And, in his haste, wellnigh he fell;
To the squire's hand the rein he threw,
And spoke no word as he withdrew:
But yet the moonlight did betray,
The falcon-crest was soil'd with clay;
And plainly might Fitz-Eustace see,
By stains upon the charger's knee,
And his left side, that on the moor
He had not kept his footing sure.
Long musing on these wondrous signs,
At length to rest the squire reclines,
Broken and short; for still, between,
Would dreams of terror intervene:
Eustace did ne'er so blithely mark
The first notes of the morning lark.

## Introduction to Canto Fourth

### To JAMES SKENE, Esq.[1]

*Ashestiel, Ettrick Forest.*

An ancient Minstrel sagely said,
"Where is the life which late we led?"
That motley clown in Arden wood,
Whom humorous Jaques with envy view'd,
Not even that clown could amplify,
On this trite text, so long as I.
Eleven years we now may tell,
Since we have known each other well;
Since, riding side by side, our hand
First drew the voluntary brand;
And sure, through many a varied scene,
Unkindness never came between.
Away these winged years have flown,
To join the mass of ages gone;
And though deep mark'd, like all below,
With chequer'd shades of joy and woe;

1 Mr. Skene, of Rubislaw, Aberdeen, was one of Scott's comrades in the Light Horse Volunteers.

Though thou o'er realms and seas hast ranged,
Mark'd cities lost, and empires changed,
While here, at home, my narrower ken
Somewhat of manners saw, and men;
Though varying wishes, hopes, and fears,
Fever'd the progress of these years,
Yet now, days, weeks, and months, but seem
The recollection of a dream,
So still we glide down to the sea
Of fathomless eternity.

Even now it scarcely seems a day,
Since first I tuned this idle lay;
A task so often thrown aside,
When leisure graver cares denied,
That now, November's dreary gale,
Whose voice inspir'd my opening tale,
That same November gale once more
Whirls the dry leaves on Yarrow shore.
Their vex'd boughs streaming to the sky,
Once more our naked birches sigh,
And Blackhouse heights,* and Ettrick Pen,
Have donn'd their wintry shrouds again:
And mountain dark, and flooded mead,
Bid us forsake the banks of Tweed.
Earlier than wont along the sky,
Mix'd with the rack, the snow mists fly;
The shepherd who, in summer sun,
Had something of our envy won,
As thou with pencil, I with pen,
The features traced of hill and glen;—
He who, outstretch'd the livelong day,
At ease among the heath-flowers lay,
View'd the light clouds with vacant look,
Or slumber'd o'er his tatter'd book,
Or idly busied him to guide
His angle o'er the lessen'd tide;—
At midnight now, the snowy plain
Finds sterner labour for the swain.

When red hath set the beamless sun,
Through heavy vapours dark and dun;

When the tired ploughman, dry and warm,
Hears, half-asleep, the rising storm
Hurling the hail, and sleeted rain,
Against the casement's tinkling pane;
The sounds that drive wild deer, and fox,
To shelter in the brake and rocks,
Are warnings which the shepherd ask
To dismal and to dangerous task.
Oft he looks forth, and hopes, in vain,
The blast may sink in mellowing rain;
Till, dark above, and white below,
Decided drives the flaky snow,
And forth the hardy swain must go.
Long, with dejected look and whine,
To leave the hearth his dogs repine;
Whistling and cheering them to aid,
Around his back he wreathes the plaid:
His flock he gathers, and he guides,
To open downs, and mountain-sides,
Where fiercest though the tempest blow,
Least deeply lies the drift below.
The blast, that whistles o'er the fells,
Stiffens his locks to icicles;
Oft he looks back, while streaming far,
His cottage window seems a star,—
Loses its feeble gleam,—and then
Turns patient to the blast again,
And, facing to the tempest's sweep,
Drives through the gloom his lagging sheep.
If fails his heart, if his limbs fail,
Benumbing death is in the gale:
His paths, his landmarks, all unknown,
Close to the hut no more his own,
Close to the aid he sought in vain,
The morn may find the stiffen'd swain:
The widow sees, at dawning pale,
His orphans raise their feeble wail;
And, close beside him, in the snow,
Poor Yarrow, partner of their woe,
Couches upon his master's breast,
And licks his cheek to break his rest.

Who envies now the shepherd's lot,
His healthy fare, his rural cot,
His summer couch by greenwood tree,
His rustic kirn's [1] loud revelry,
His native hill-notes tuned on high,
To Marion of the blithesome eye;
His crook, his scrip, his oaten reed,
And all Arcadia's golden creed?

Changes not so with us, my Skene,
Of human life the varying scene?
Our youthful summer oft we see
Dance by on wings of game and glee,
While the dark storm reserves its rage,
Against the winter of our age:
As he, the ancient Chief of Troy,
His manhood spent in peace and joy;
But Grecian fires, and loud alarms,
Call'd ancient Priam forth to arms.
Then happy those, since each must drain
His share of pleasure, share of pain,—
Then happy those, beloved of Heaven,
To whom the mingled cup is given;
Whose lenient sorrows find relief,
Whose joys are chasten'd by their grief.
And such a lot, my Skene, was thine,
When thou, of late, wert doom'd to twine,—
Just when thy bridal hour was by,—
The cypress with the myrtle tie.
Just on thy bride her Sire had smiled,
And bless'd the union of his child,
When love must change its joyous cheer,
And wipe affection's filial tear.
Nor did the actions next his end,
Speak more the father than the friend:
Scarce had lamented Forbes [2] paid
The tribute to his Minstrel's shade;
The tale of friendship scarce was told,
Ere the narrator's heart was cold—

[1] The Scottish Harvest-home.
[2] Sir W. Forbes of Pitsligo, author of a life of "Minstrel" Beattie.

Far may we search before we find
A heart so manly and so kind!
But not around his honour'd urn,
Shall friends alone and kindred mourn;
The thousand eyes his care had dried,
Pour at his name a bitter tide;
And frequent falls the grateful dew,
For benefits the world ne'er knew.
If mortal charity dare claim
The Almighty's attributed name,
Inscribe above his mouldering clay,
"The widow's shield, the orphan's stay."
Nor, though it wake thy sorrow, deem
My verse intrudes on this sad theme;
For sacred was the pen that wrote,
"Thy father's friend forget thou not":
And grateful title may I plead,
For many a kindly word and deed,
To bring my tribute to his grave:—
'Tis little—but 'tis all I have.

To thee, perchance, this rambling strain
Recalls our summer walks again;
When, doing nought,—and, to speak true,
Not anxious to find aught to do,—
The wild unbounded hills we ranged,
While oft our talk its topic changed,
And, desultory as our way,
Ranged, unconfined, from grave to gay.
Even when it flagg'd, as oft will chance,
No effort made to break its trance,
We could right pleasantly pursue
Our sports in social silence too;
Thou gravely labouring to portray
The blighted oak's fantastic spray;
I spelling o'er, with much delight,
The legend of that antique knight,
Tirante by name, yclep'd the White.
At either's feet a trusty squire,
Pandour and Camp,[1] with eyes of fire,

[1] *Camp* was a favourite dog of the poet's, a bull-terrier of extraordinary sagacity.

Jealous, each other's motions view'd,
And scarce suppress'd their ancient feud.
The laverock whistled from the cloud;
The stream was lively, but not loud;
From the white thorn the May-flower shed
Its dewy fragrance round our head:
Not Ariel lived more merrily
Under the blossom'd bough, than we.

And blithesome nights, too, have been ours,
When Winter stript the summer's bowers.
Careless we heard, what now I hear,
The wild blast sighing deep and drear,
When fires were bright, and lamps beam'd gay,
And ladies tuned the lovely lay;
And he was held a laggard soul,
Who shunn'd to quaff the sparkling bowl.
Then he, whose absence we deplore,[1]
Who breathes the gales of Devon's shore,
The longer miss'd, bewail'd the more;
And thou, and I, and dear-loved Rae,
And one whose name I may not say,—
For not Mimosa's tender tree
Shrinks sooner from the touch than he,—
In merry chorus well combined,
With laughter drown'd the whistling wind.
Mirth was within; and Care without
Might gnaw her nails to hear our shout.
Not but amid the buxom scene
Some grave discourse might intervene—
Of the good horse that bore him best,
His shoulder, hoof, and arching crest:
For, like mad Tom's, our chiefest care,
Was horse to ride, and weapon wear.
Such nights we've had; and, though the game
Of manhood be more sober tame,

[1] The three friends here commemorated as boon companions when the volunteer corps was in camp were Colin Mackenzie, a contributor to the *Border Minstrelsy*, afterwards a clerk of the Court of Session; Sir W. Rae, afterwards Lord-Advocate; and Sir W. Forbes, younger of Pitsligo, who married Scott's first love, and who, in the disastrous Ballantyne affair of Scott's later years, rendered him generous service as representative of one of his largest creditors.

And though the field-day, or the drill,
Seem less important now—yet still
Such may we hope to share again.
The sprightly thought inspires my strain!
And mark, how, like a horseman true,
Lord Marmion's march I thus renew.

## CANTO FOURTH

### The Camp

I

Eustace, I said, did blithely mark
The first notes of the merry lark.
The lark sang shrill, the cock he crew,
And loudly Marmion's bugles blew,
And with their light and lively call,
Brought groom and yeoman to the stall.
Whistling they came, and free of heart,
But soon their mood was changed;
Complaint was heard on every part,
Of something disarranged.
Some clamour'd loud for armour lost;
Some brawl'd and wrangled with the host;
"By Becket's bones," cried one, "I fear,
That some false Scot has stolen my spear!"—
Young Blount, Lord Marmion's second squire,
Found his steed wet with sweat and mire;
Although the rated horse-boy sware,
Last night he dress'd him sleek and fair.
While chafed the impatient squire like thunder,
Old Hubert shouts, in fear and wonder,—
"Help, gentle Blount! help, comrades all!
Bevis lies dying in his stall:
To Marmion who the plight dare tell,
Of the good steed he loves so well?"
Gaping for fear and ruth, they saw
The charger panting on his straw;
Till one, who would seem wisest, cried,—

"What else but evil could betide,
With that cursed Palmer for our guide?
Better we had through mire and bush
Been lantern-led by Friar Rush."[1]

II

Fitz-Eustace, who the cause but guess'd,
Nor wholly understood,
His comrades' clamorous plaints suppress'd;
He knew Lord Marmion's mood.
Him, ere he issued forth, he sought,
And found deep plunged in gloomy thought,
And did his tale display
Simply, as if he knew of nought
To cause such disarray.
Lord Marmion gave attention cold,
Nor marvell'd at the wonders told,—
Pass'd them as accidents of course,
And bade his clarions sound to horse.

III

Young Henry Blount, meanwhile, the cost
Had reckon'd with their Scottish host;
And, as the charge he cast and paid,
"I'll thou deserv'st thy hire," he said;
"Dost see, thou knave, my horse's plight?
Fairies have ridden him all the night,
And left him in a foam!
I trust that soon a conjuring band,
With English cross, and blazing brand,
Shall drive the devils from this land,
To their infernal home:
For in this haunted den, I trow,
All night they trample to and fro."—
The laughing host look'd on the hire,—
"Gramercy, gentle southern squire,
And if thou comest among the rest,
With Scottish broadsword to be blest,
Sharp be the brand, and sure the blow,
And short the pang to undergo."

[1] A strolling demon, a sort of Robin Goodfellow or Jack o' Lanthorn.

Here stay'd their talk,—for Marmion
Gave now the signal to set on.
The Palmer showing forth the way,
They journey'd all the morning day.

IV

The green-sward way was smooth and good,
Through Humbie's and through Saltoun's wood;
A forest-glade, which, varying still,
Here gave a view of dale and hill,
There narrower closed, till over head
A vaulted screen the branches made.
"A pleasant path," Fitz-Eustace said;
"Such as where errant-knights might see
Adventures of high chivalry;
Might meet some damsel flying fast,
With hair unbound, and looks aghast;
And smooth and level course were here,
In her defence to break a spear.
Here, too, are twilight nooks and dells;
And oft, in such, the story tells,
The damsel kind, from danger freed,
Did grateful pay her champion's meed."
He spoke to cheer Lord Marmion's mind:
Perchance to show his lore design'd;
For Eustace much had pored
Upon a huge romantic tome,
In the hall-window of his home,
Imprinted at the antique dome
Of Caxton, or De Worde,
Therefore he spoke,—but spoke in vain,
For Marmion answer'd nought again.

V

Now sudden, distant trumpets shrill,
In notes prolong'd by wood and hill,
Were heard to echo far;
Each ready archer grasp'd his bow,
But by the flourish soon they know,
They breathed no point of war.
Yet cautious, as in foeman's land,
Lord Marmion's order speeds the band,

Some opener ground to gain ;
And scarce a furlong had they rode,
When thinner trees, receding, show'd
A little woodland plain.
Just in that advantageous glade,
The halting troop a line had made,
As forth from the opposing shade
Issued a gallant train.

VI

First came the trumpets, at whose clang
So late the forest echoes rang ;
On prancing steeds they forward press'd,
With scarlet mantle, azure vest ;
Each at his trump a banner wore,
Which Scotland's royal scutcheon bore :
Heralds and pursuivants, by name
Bute, Islay, Marchmount, Rothsay, came
In painted tabards, proudly showing
Gules, Argent, Or, and Azure glowing,
Attendant on a King-at-arms,
Whose hand the armorial truncheon held,
That feudal strife had often quell'd,
When wildest its alarms.

VII

He was a man of middle age ;
In aspect manly, grave, and sage,
As on King's errand come ;
But in the glances of his eye,
A penetrating, keen, and sly
Expression found its home ;
The flash of that satiric rage,
Which, bursting on the early stage,
Branded the vices of the age,
And broke the keys of Rome.
On milk-white palfrey forth he paced ;
His cap of maintenance was graced
With the proud heron-plume.
From his steed's shoulder, loin, and breast,
Silk housings swept the ground,

With Scotland's arms, device, and crest,
Embroider'd round and round.
The double tressure might you see,
First by Achaius borne,
The thistle and the fleur-de-lis,
And gallant unicorn.
So bright the King's armorial coat,
That scarce the dazzled eye could note,
In living colours, blazon'd brave,
The Lion, which his title gave;
A train, which well beseem'd his state,
But all unarm'd, around him wait.
Still is thy name in high account,
And still thy verse has charms,
Sir David Lindesay of the Mount,
Lord Lion King-at-arms![1]

VIII

Down from his horse did Marmion spring,
Soon as he saw the Lion-King;
For well the stately Baron knew
To him such courtesy was due,
Whom Royal James himself had crown'd,
And on his temples placed the round
Of Scotland's ancient diadem:
And wet his brow with hallow'd wine,
And on his finger given to shine
The emblematic gem.
Their mutual greetings duly made,
The Lion thus his message said:—
"Though Scotland's King hath deeply swore
Ne'er to knit faith with Henry more,
And strictly hath forbid resort
From England to his royal court;
Yet, for he knows Lord Marmion's name,
And honours much his warlike fame,
My liege hath deem'd it shame, and lack
Of courtesy, to turn him back;

1 "I am uncertain," Scott wrote, "if I abuse poetical license by introducing Sir David Lindesay in the character of Lion-Herald sixteen years before he obtained that office."

And, by his order, I, your guide,
Must lodging fit and fair provide,
Till finds King James meet time to see
The flower of English chivalry."

IX

Though inly chafed at this delay,
Lord Marmion bears it as he may.
The Palmer, his mysterious guide,
Beholding thus his place supplied,
Sought to take leave in vain:
Strict was the Lion-King's command,
That none, who rode in Marmion's band,
Should sever from the train:
"England has here enow of spies
In Lady Heron's witching eyes":
To Marchmount thus, apart, he said,
But fair pretext to Marmion made.
The right-hand path they now decline,
And trace against the stream the Tyne.

X

At length up that wild dale they wind,
Where Crichtoun Castle[1] crowns the bank,
For there the Lion's care assign'd
A lodging meet for Marmion's rank.
That Castle rises on the steep
Of the green vale of Tyne:
And far beneath, where slow they creep,
From pool to eddy, dark and deep,
Where alders moist, and willows weep,
You hear her streams repine.
The towers in different ages rose;
Their various architecture shows
The builders' various hands;
A mighty mass, that could oppose,
When deadliest hatred fired its foes,
The vengeful Douglas bands.

[1] A large ruinous castle on the banks of the Tyne, about ten miles from Edinburgh.

XI

Crichtoun! though now thy miry court
But pens the lazy steer and sheep,
Thy turrets rude, and totter'd Keep,
Have been the minstrel's loved resort.
Oft have I traced, within thy fort,
Of mouldering shields the mystic sense,
Scutcheons of honour, or pretence,
Quarter'd in old armorial sort,
Remains of rude magnificence.
Nor wholly yet had time defaced
Thy lordly gallery fair;
Nor yet the stony cord unbraced,
Whose twisted knots, with roses laced,
Adorn thy ruin'd stair.
Still rises unimpair'd below,
The court-yard's graceful portico;
Above its cornice, row and row
Of fair hewn facets richly show
Their pointed diamond form,
Though there but houseless cattle go,
To shield them from the storm.
And, shuddering, still may we explore,
Where oft whilom were captives pent,
The darkness of thy Massy More;[1]
Or, from thy grass-grown battlement,
May trace, in undulating line,
The sluggish mazes of the Tyne.

XII

Another aspect Crichtoun show'd,
As through its portal Marmion rode;
But yet 'twas melancholy state
Received him at the outer gate;
For none were in the Castle then,
But women, boys, or aged men.
With eyes scarce dried, the sorrowing dame,
To welcome noble Marmion, came;
Her son, a stripling twelve years old,
Proffer'd the Baron's rein to hold;

[1] The pit, or prison vault. The word is of Saracenic origin.

For each man that could draw a sword
Had march'd that morning with their lord,
Earl Adam Hepburn,—he who died
On Flodden, by his sovereign's side:[1]
Long may his Lady look in vain!
She ne'er shall see his gallant train
Come sweeping back through Crichtoun-Dean.
'Twas a brave race, before the name
Of hated Bothwell stain'd their fame.

XIII

And here two days did Marmion rest,
With every rite that honour claims,
Attended as the King's own guest;—
Such the command of Royal James,
Who marshall'd then his land's array,
Upon the Borough-moor that lay.
Perchance he would not foeman's eye
Upon his gathering host should pry,
Till full prepared was every band
To march against the English land.
Here while they dwelt, did Lindesay's wit
Oft cheer the Baron's moodier fit;
And, in his turn, he knew to prize
Lord Marmion's powerful mind, and wise,—
Train'd in the lore of Rome and Greece,
And policies of war and peace.

XIV

It chanced, as fell the second night,
That on the battlements they walk'd,
And, by the slowly fading light,
Of varying topics talk'd;
And, unaware, the Herald-bard
Said, Marmion might his toil have spared,
In travelling so far;
For that a messenger from heaven
In vain to James had counsel given
Against the English war;
And, closer question'd, thus he told
A tale, which chronicles of old
In Scottish story have enroll'd:—

[1] Earl of Bothwell, grandfather of Queen Mary's Bothwell.

XV

## Sir David Lindesay's Tale

"Of all the palaces so fair,
Built for the royal dwelling,
In Scotland, far beyond compare,
Linlithgow is excelling;
And in its park, in jovial June,
How sweet the merry linnet's tune,
How blithe the blackbird's lay!
The wild-buck bells[1] from ferny brake,
The coot dives merry on the lake;
The saddest heart might pleasure take
To see all nature gay.
But June is, to our Sovereign dear,
The heaviest month in all the year:
Too well his cause of grief you know—
June saw his father's overthrow.[2]
Woe to the traitors, who could bring
The princely boy against his King!
Still in his conscience burns the sting.
In offices as strict as Lent,
King James's June is ever spent.

XVI

"When last this ruthful month was come,
And in Linlithgow's holy dome
The King, as wont, was praying;
While, for his royal father's soul,
The chanters sung, the bells did toll,
The Bishop mass was saying—
For now the year brought round again
The day the luckless king was slain—
In Katharine's aisle the Monarch knelt,
With sackcloth-shirt and iron belt,
And eyes with sorrow streaming;
Around him, in their stalls of state,
The Thistle's Knight-Companions sate,

1 An abbreviation of *bellows*. Scott prided himself on finding in archaic language another word than *braying* for the cry of the deer.

2 James IV. was with the rebel army at Sauchieburn, in the flight from which his father, James III., was slain.

Their banners o'er them beaming.
I too was there, and, sooth to tell,
Bedeafen'd with the jangling knell,
Was watching where the sunbeams fell,
Through the stain'd casement gleaming;
But, while I marked what next befell,
It seem'd as I were dreaming.
Stepp'd from the crowd a ghostly wight,
In azure gown, with cincture white;
His forehead bald, his head was bare,
Down hung at length his yellow hair.—
Now, mock me not, when, good my Lord,
I pledge to you my knightly word,
That, when I saw his placid grace,
His simple majesty of face,
His solemn bearing, and his pace
So stately gliding on,—
Seem'd to me ne'er did limner paint
So just an image of the Saint,
Who propp'd the Virgin in her faint,—
The loved Apostle John!

XVII

"He stepp'd before the Monarch's chair,
And stood with rustic plainness there,
And little reverence made;
Nor head, nor body, bow'd nor bent,
But on the desk his arm he leant,
And words like these he said,
In a low voice,—but never tone
So thrill'd through vein, and nerve, and bone:
'My mother sent me from afar,
Sir King, to warn thee not to war,—
Woe waits on thine array;
If war thou wilt, of woman fair,
Her witching wiles and wanton snare,
James Stuart, doubly warn'd, beware:
God keep thee as he may!'—
The wondering Monarch seem'd to seek
For answer, and found none;
And when he raised his head to speak,
The monitor was gone.

The Marshal and myself had cast
To stop him as he outward pass'd;
But, lighter than the whirlwind's blast,
He vanish'd from our eyes,
Like sunbeam on the billow cast,
That glances but, and dies."

XVIII

While Lindesay told his marvel strange,
The twilight was so pale,
He mark'd not Marmion's colour change,
While listening to the tale;
But, after a suspended pause,
The Baron spoke:—"Of Nature's laws
So strong I held the force,
That never superhuman cause
Could e'er control their course;
And, three days since, had judged your aim
Was but to make your guest your game.
But I have seen, since past the Tweed,
What much has changed my sceptic creed,
And made me credit aught."—He staid,
And seem'd to wish his words unsaid:
But, by that strong emotion press'd,
Which prompts us to unload our breast,
Even when discovery's pain,
To Lindesay did at length unfold
The tale his village host had told,
At Gifford, to his train.
Nought of the Palmer says he there,
And nought of Constance, or of Clare;
The thoughts which broke his sleep, he seems
To mention but as feverish dreams.

XIX

"In vain," said he, "to rest I spread
My burning limbs, and couch'd my head:
Fantastic thoughts return'd;
And, by their wild dominion led,
My heart within me burn'd.
So sore was the delirious goad,
I took my steed, and forth I rode,

And, as the moon shone bright and cold,
Soon reach'd the camp upon the wold.
The southern entrance I pass'd through,
And halted, and my bugle blew.
Methought an answer met my ear,—
Yet was the blast so low and drear,
So hollow, and so faintly blown,
It might be echo of my own.

XX

"Thus judging, for a little space
I listen'd, ere I left the place;
But scarce could trust my eyes,
Nor yet can think they served me true,
When sudden in the ring I view,
In form distinct of shape and hue,
A mounted champion rise.—
I've fought, Lord-Lion, many a day,
In single fight, and mix'd affray,
And ever, I myself may say,
Have borne me as a knight;
But when this unexpected foe
Seem'd starting from the gulf below,—
I care not though the truth I show,—
I trembled with affright;
And as I placed in rest my spear,
My hand so shook for very fear,
I scarce could couch it right.

XXI

"Why need my tongue the issue tell?
We ran our course,—my charger fell;—
What could he 'gainst the shock of hell?—
I roll'd upon the plain.
High o'er my head, with threatening hand,
The spectre shook his naked brand,—
Yet did the worst remain:
My dazzled eyes I upward cast,—
Not opening hell itself could blast
Their sight, like what I saw!
Full on his face the moonbeam strook,—
A face could never be mistook!

I knew the stern vindictive look,
And held my breath for awe.
I saw the face of one who, fled
To foreign climes, has long been dead,—
I well believe the last;
For ne'er, from vizor raised, did stare
A human warrior, with a glare
So grimly and so ghast.
Thrice o'er my head he shook the blade;
But when to good Saint George I pray'd
(The first time e'er I ask'd his aid),
He plunged it in the sheath;
And, on his courser mounting light,
He seem'd to vanish from my sight:
The moonbeam droop'd, and deepest night
Sunk down upon the heath.—
'Twere long to tell what cause I have
To know his face, that met me there,
Call'd by his hatred from the grave,
To cumber upper air:
Dead or alive, good cause had he
To be my mortal enemy."

XXII

Marvell'd Sir David of the Mount;
Then, learn'd in story, 'gan recount
Such chance had happ'd of old,
When once, near Norham, there did fight
A spectre fell of fiendish might,
In likeness of a Scottish knight,
With Brian Bulmer bold,
And train'd him nigh to disallow
The aid of his baptismal vow.
"And such a phantom, too, 'tis said,
With Highland broadsword, targe, and plaid,
And fingers red with gore,
Is seen in Rothiemurcus glade,
Or where the sable pine-trees shade
Dark Tomantoul and Auchnaslaid,
Dromouchty, or Glenmore.
And yet, whate'er such legends say,
Of warlike demon, ghost, or fay,

On mountain, moor, or plain,
Spotless in faith, in bosom bold,
True son of chivalry should hold
These midnight terrors vain;
For seldom have such spirits power
To harm, save in the evil hour,
When guilt we meditate within,
Or harbour unrepented sin."—
Lord Marmion turn'd him half aside,
And twice to clear his voice he tried,
Then press'd Sir David's hand,—
But nought, at length, in answer said;
And here their farther converse staid,
Each ordering that his band
Should bowne them with the rising day,
To Scotland's camp to take their way,—
Such was the King's command.

XXIII

Early they took Dun-Edin's road,
And I could trace each step they trode:
Hill, brook, nor dell, nor rock, nor stone,
Lies on the path to me unknown.
Much might it boast of storied lore;
But, passing such digression o'er,
Suffice it that the route was laid
Across the furzy hills of Braid.
They pass'd the glen and scanty rill,
And climb'd the opposing bank, until
They gain'd the top of Blackford Hill.

XXIV

Blackford! on whose uncultured breast,
Among the broom, and thorn, and whin,
A truant-boy, I sought the nest,
Or listed, as I lay at rest,
While rose, on breezes thin,
The murmur of the city crowd,
And, from his steeple jangling loud,
Saint Giles's mingling din.
Now, from the summit to the plain,
Waves all the hill with yellow grain;
And o'er the landscape as I look,

Nought do I see unchanged remain,
Save the rude cliffs and chiming brook.
To me they make a heavy moan,
Of early friendships past and gone.

XXV

But different far the change has been,
Since Marmion, from the crown
Of Blackford, saw that martial scene
Upon the bent so brown:
Thousand pavilions, white as snow,
Spread all the Borough-moor below,[1]
Upland, and dale, and down:—
A thousand did I say? I ween,
Thousands on thousands there were seen,
That chequer'd all the heath between
The streamlet and the town;
In crossing ranks extending far,
Forming a camp irregular;
Oft giving way, where still there stood
Some relics of the old oak wood,
That darkly huge did intervene,
And tamed the glaring white with green:
In these extended lines there lay
A martial kingdom's vast array.

XXVI

For from Hebudes, dark with rain,
To eastern Lodon's fertile plain,
And from the southern Redswire edge,
To farthest Rosse's rocky ledge;
From west to east, from south to north,
Scotland sent all her warriors forth.
Marmion might hear the mingled hum
Of myriads up the mountain come;
The horses' tramp, and tingling clank,
Where chiefs review'd their vassal rank,
And charger's shrilling nēigh;
And see the shifting lines advance,

1 The Borough or Common Moor of Edinburgh was of very great extent, reaching from the southern walls of the city to the bottom of Braid Hills.

While frequent flash'd, from shield and lance,
The sun's reflected ray.

XXVII

Thin curling in the morning air,
The wreaths of failing smoke declare
To embers now the brands decay'd,
Where the night-watch their fires had made,
They saw, slow rolling on the plain,
Full many a baggage-cart and wain,
And dire artillery's clumsy car,
By sluggish oxen tugg'd to war;
And there were Borthwick's Sisters Seven,[1]
And culverins which France had given.
Ill-omen'd gift! the guns remain
The conqueror's spoil on Flodden plain.

XXVIII

Nor mark'd they less, where in the air
A thousand streamers flaunted fair;
Various in shape, device, and hue,
Green, sanguine, purple, red, and blue,
Broad, narrow, swallow-tail'd, and square,
Scroll, pennon, pensil, bandrol,[2] there
O'er the pavilions flew.
Highest, and midmost, was descried
The royal banner floating wide;
The staff, a pine-tree, strong and straight,
Pitch'd deeply in a massive stone,
Which still in memory is shown,
Yet bent beneath the standard's weight
Whene'er the western wind unroll'd,
With toil, the huge and cumbrous fold,
And gave to view the dazzling field,
Where, in proud Scotland's royal shield,
The ruddy lion ramp'd in gold.

XXIX

Lord Marmion view'd the landscape bright,—
He view'd it with a chief's delight,—

1 Seven culverins so called, cast by one Borthwick.

2 Each of these feudal ensigns intimated the different rank of those entitled to display them.

Until within him burn'd his heart,
And lightning from his eye did part
As on the battle-day;
Such glance did falcon never dart,
When stooping on his prey.
"Oh! well, Lord-Lion, hast thou said,
Thy King from warfare to dissuade
Were but a vain essay:
For, by St. George, were that host mine,
Not power infernal nor divine
Should once to peace my soul incline,
Till I had dimm'd their armour's shine
In glorious battle-fray!"
Answer'd the Bard, of milder mood:
"Fair is the sight,—and yet 'twere good,
That kings would think withal,
When peace and wealth their land has bless'd,
'Tis better to sit still at rest,
Than rise, perchance to fall."

XXX

Still on the spot Lord Marmion stay'd,
For fairer scene he ne'er survey'd.
When sated with the martial show
That peopled all the plain below,
The wandering eye could o'er it go,
And mark the distant city glow
With gloomy splendour red;
For on the smoke-wreaths, huge and slow,
That round her sable turrets flow,
The morning beams were shed,
And tinged them with a lustre proud,
Like that which streaks a thunder-cloud.
Such dusky grandeur clothed the height,
Where the huge Castle holds its state,
And all the steep slope down,
Whose ridgy back heaves to the sky,
Piled deep and massy, close and high,
Mine own romantic town!
But northward far, with purer blaze,
On Ochil mountains fell the rays,

And as each heathy top they kiss'd,
It gleam'd a purple amethyst.
Yonder the shores of Fife you saw;
Here Preston-Bay and Berwick-Law:
And, broad between them roll'd,
The gallant Frith the eye might note,
Whose islands on its bosom float,
Like emeralds chased in gold.
Fitz-Eustace' heart felt closely pent;
As if to give his rapture vent,
The spur he to his charger lent,
And raised his bridle hand,
And making demi-volte in air,
Cried, "Where's the coward that would not dare
To fight for such a land!"
The Lindesay smiled his joy to see;
Nor Marmion's frown repress'd his glee.

XXXI

Thus while they look'd, a flourish proud,
Where mingled trump, and clarion loud,
And fife and kettle-drum,
And sackbut deep, and psaltery,
And war-pipe with discordant cry,
And cymbal clattering to the sky,
Making wild music bold and high,
Did up the mountain come;
The whilst the bells, with distant chime,
Merrily toll'd the hour of prime,
And thus the Lindesay spoke:
"Thus clamour still the war-notes when
The king to mass his way has ta'en,
Or to St. Katharine's of Sienne,
Or Chapel of Saint Rocque.
To you they speak of martial fame;
But me remind of peaceful game,
When blither was their cheer,
Thrilling in Falkland-woods the air,
In signal none his steed should spare,
But strive which foremost might repair
To the downfall of the deer.

XXXII

"Nor less," he said,—"when looking forth,
I view yon Empress of the North
Sit on her hilly throne;
Her palace's imperial bowers,
Her castle, proof to hostile powers,
Her stately halls and holy towers—
Nor less," he said, "I moan,
To think what woe mischance may bring,
And how these merry bells may ring
The death-dirge of our gallant King;
Or with the larum call
The burghers forth to watch and ward,
'Gainst southern sack and fires to guard
Dun-Edin's leaguer'd wall.—
But not for my presaging thought,
Dream conquest sure, or cheaply bought!
Lord Marmion, I say nay:
God is the guider of the field,
He breaks the champion's spear and shield,—
But thou thyself shalt say,
When joins yon host in deadly stowre,
That England's dames must weep in bower,
Her monks the death-mass sing;
For never saw'st thou such a power
Led on by such a King."—
And now, down winding to the plain,
The barriers of the camp they gain,
And there they made a stay.—
There stays the Minstrel, till he fling
His hand o'er every Border string,
And fit his harp the pomp to sing,
Of Scotland's ancient Court and King,
In the succeeding lay.

## Introduction to Canto Fifth

### To GEORGE ELLIS, Esq.[1]

*Edinburgh.*

When dark December glooms the day,
And takes our autumn joys away;
When short and scant the sunbeam throws,
Upon the weary waste of snows,
A cold and profitless regard,
Like patron on a needy bard;
When silvan occupation's done,
And o'er the chimney rests the gun,
And hang, in idle trophy, near,
The game-pouch, fishing-rod, and spear;
When wiry terrier, rough and grim,
And greyhound, with his length of limb,
And pointer, now employ'd no more,
Cumber our parlour's narrow floor;
When in his stall the impatient steed
Is long condemn'd to rest and feed;
When from our snow-encircled home,
Scarce cares the hardiest step to roam,
Since path is none, save that to bring
The needful water from the spring;
When wrinkled news-page, thrice conn'd o'er,
Beguiles the dreary hour no more,
And darkling politician, cross'd,
Inveighs against the lingering post,
And answering housewife sore complains
Of carriers' snow-impeded wains;—
When such the country cheer, I come,
Well pleased, to seek our city home;
For converse, and for books, to change
The Forest's melancholy range,
And welcome, with renew'd delight,
The busy day and social night.

Not here need my desponding rhyme
Lament the ravages of time,

[1] Editor of *Specimens of Ancient English Romances*, etc.

As erst by Newark's riven towers,
And Ettrick stripp'd of forest bowers.
True,—Caledonia's Queen is changed,
Since on her dusky summit ranged,
Within its steepy limits pent,
By bulwark, line, and battlement,
And flanking towers, and laky flood,
Guarded and garrison'd she stood,
Denying entrance or resort,
Save at each tall embattled port;
Above whose arch, suspended, hung
Portcullis spiked with iron prong.
That long is gone,—but not so long,
Since, early closed, and opening late,
Jealous revolved the studded gate,
Whose task, from eve to morning tide,
A wicket churlishly supplied.
Stern then, and steel-girt was thy brow,
Dun-Edin! O, how alter'd now,
When safe amid thy mountain court
Thou sitt'st, like Empress at her sport,
And liberal, unconfined, and free,
Flinging thy white arms to the sea,
For thy dark cloud, with umber'd lower,
That hung o'er cliff, and lake, and tower,
Thou gleam'st against the western ray
Ten thousand lines of brighter day.

Not she, the Championess of old,
In Spenser's magic tale enroll'd,—
She for the charmed spear renown'd,
Which forced each knight to kiss the ground,
Not she more changed, when, placed at rest,
What time she was Malbecco's guest,[1]
She gave to flow her maiden vest;
When from the corslet's grasp relieved,
Free to the sight her bosom heaved;
Sweet was her blue eye's modest smile,
Erst hidden by the aventayle;
And down her shoulders graceful roll'd
Her locks profuse, of paly gold.

[1] See "The Fairy Queen," book iii. canto ix.

They who whilom, in midnight fight,
Had marvell'd at her matchless might,
No less her maiden charms approved,
But looking liked, and liking loved.
The sight could jealous pangs beguile,
And charm Malbecco's cares a while;
And he, the wandering Squire of Dames,
Forgot his Columbella's claims,
And passion, erst unknown, could gain
The breast of blunt Sir Satyrane;
Nor durst light Paridel advance,
Bold as he was, a looser glance.
She charm'd, at once, and tamed the heart,
Incomparable Britomarte!

So thou, fair City! disarray'd
Of battled wall, and rampart's aid,
As stately seem'st, but lovelier far
Than in that panoply of war.
Nor deem that from thy fenceless throne
Strength and security are flown;
Still, as of yore, Queen of the North!
Still canst thou send thy children forth.
Ne'er readier at alarm-bell's call
Thy burghers rose to man thy wall,
Than now, in danger, shall be thine,
Thy dauntless voluntary line;
For fosse and turret proud to stand,
Their breasts the bulwarks of the land.
Thy thousands, train'd to martial toil,
Full red would stain their native soil,
Ere from thy mural crown there fell
The slightest knosp, or pinnacle.
And if it come,—as come it may,
Dun-Edin! that eventful day,—
Renown'd for hospitable deed,
That virtue much with Heaven may plead,
In patriarchal times whose care
Descending angels deign'd to share;
That claim may wrestle blessings down
On those who fight for The Good Town,
Destined in every age to be

Refuge of injured royalty;
Since first, when conquering York arose,
To Henry meek she gave repose,
Till late, with wonder, grief, and awe,
Great Bourbon's relics, sad she saw.

Truce to these thoughts!—for, as they rise,
How gladly I avert mine eyes,
Bodings, or true or false, to change,
For Fiction's fair romantic range,
Or for Tradition's dubious light,
That hovers 'twixt the day and night:
Dazzling alternately and dim,
Her wavering lamp I'd rather trim,
Knights, squires, and lovely dames to see,
Creation of my fantasy,
Than gaze abroad on reeky fen,
And make of mists invading men.
Who loves not more the night of June
Than dull December's gloomy noon?
The moonlight than the fog of frost?
And can we say, which cheats the most?

But who shall teach my harp to gain
A sound of the romantic strain,
Whose Anglo-Norman tones whilere
Could win the royal Henry's ear,
Famed Beauclerc call'd, for that he loved
The minstrel, and his lay approved?
Who shall these lingering notes redeem,
Decaying on Oblivion's stream;
Such notes as from the Breton tongue
Marie translated, Blondel sung?—
O! born, Time's ravage to repair,
And make the dying Muse thy care;
Who, when his scythe her hoary foe
Was poising for the final blow,
The weapon from his hand could wring,
And break his glass, and shear his wing,
And bid, reviving in his strain,
The gentle poet live again;
Thou, who canst give to lightest lay

An unpedantic moral gay,
Nor less the dullest theme bid flit
On wings of unexpected wit;
In letters as in life approved,
Example honour'd, and beloved,—
Dear Ellis! to the bard impart
A lesson of thy magic art,
To win at once the head and heart,—
At once to charm, instruct, and mend,
My guide, my pattern, and my friend!

Such minstrel lesson to bestow
Be long thy pleasing task,—but, O!
No more by thy example teach,
—What few can practise, all can preach,—
With even patience to endure
Lingering disease, and painful cure,
And boast affliction's pangs subdued
By mild and manly fortitude.
Enough, the lesson has been given:
Forbid the repetition, Heaven!

Come listen, then! for thou hast known,
And loved the Minstrel's varying tone,
Who, like his Border sires of old,
Waked a wild measure rude and bold,
Till Windsor's oaks, and Ascot plain,
With wonder heard the northern strain.[1]
Come listen! bold in thy applause,
The Bard shall scorn pedantic laws;
And, as the ancient art could stain
Achievements on the storied pane,
Irregularly traced and plann'd,
But yet so glowing and so grand,—
So shall he strive, in changeful hue,
Field, feast, and combat, to renew,
And loves, and arms, and harpers' glee,
And all the pomp of chivalry.

[1] Part of the first two cantos of *Marmion* was written at Sunninghill, Mr. Ellis's residence, near Windsor.

# CANTO FIFTH

## The Court

I

The train has left the hills of Braid;
The barrier guard have open made
(So Lindesay bade) the palisade,
That closed the tented ground;
Their men the warders backward drew,
And carried pikes as they rode through,
Into its ample bound.
Fast ran the Scottish warriors there,
Upon the Southern band to stare.
And envy with their wonder rose,
To see such well-appointed foes;
Such length of shafts, such mighty bows,
So huge, that many simply thought,
But for a vaunt such weapons wrought;
And little deem'd their force to feel,
Through links of mail, and plates of steel,
When rattling upon Flodden vale,
The cloth-yard arrows flew like hail.

II

Nor less did Marmion's skilful view
Glance every line and squadron through;
And much he marvell'd one small land
Could marshal forth such various band:
For men-at-arms were here,
Heavily sheathed in mail and plate,
Like iron towers for strength and weight,
On Flemish steeds of bone and height,
With battle-axe and spear.
Young knights and squires, a lighter train,
Practised their chargers on the plain,
By aid of leg, of hand, and rein.
Each warlike feat to show,
To pass, to wheel, the croupe to gain,
And high curvett, that not in vain

The sword sway might descend amain
On foeman's casque below.
He saw the hardy burghers there
March arm'd, on foot, with faces bare,
For vizor they wore none,
Nor waving plume, nor crest of knight;
But burnish'd were their corslets bright,
Their brigantines, and gorgets light,
Like very silver shone.
Long pikes they had for standing fight,
Two-handed swords they wore,
And many wielded mace of weight,
And bucklers bright they bore.

III

On foot the yeoman too, but dress'd
In his steel-jack, a swarthy vest,
With iron quilted well;
Each at his back (a slender store)
His forty days' provision bore,
As feudal statutes tell.
His arms were halbert, axe, or spear,
A crossbow there, a hagbut here,
A dagger-knife, and brand.
Sober he seem'd, and sad of cheer,
As loth to leave his cottage dear,
And march to foreign strand;
Or musing, who would guide his steer,
To till the fallow land.
Yet deem not, in his thoughtful eye
Did aught of dastard terror lie;
More dreadful far his ire
Than theirs, who, scorning danger's name,
In eager mood to battle came,
Their valour like light straw on flame,
A fierce but fading fire.

IV

Not so the Borderer:—bred to war,
He knew the battle's din afar,
And joyed to hear it swell.
His peaceful day was slothful ease;

Nor harp, nor pipe, his ear could please
Like the loud slogan yell.
On active steed, with lance and blade,
The light-arm'd pricker plied his trade,—
Let nobles fight for fame;
Let vassals follow where they lead,
Burghers to guard their townships bleed,
But war's the Borderer's game.
Their gain, their glory, their delight,
To sleep the day, maraud the night,
O'er mountain, moss, and moor;
Joyful to fight they took their way,
Scarce caring who might win the day,
Their booty was secure.
These, as Lord Marmion's train pass'd by,
Look'd on at first with careless eye,
Nor marvell'd aught, well taught to know
The form and force of English bow.
But when they saw the Lord array'd
In splendid arms and rich brocade,
Each Borderer to his kinsman said,—
"Hist, Ringan! seest thou there!
Canst guess which road they'll homeward ride?—
O! could we but on Border side,
By Eusedale glen, or Liddell's tide,
Beset a prize so fair!
That fangless Lion, too, their guide,
Might chance to lose his glistering hide;
Brown Maudlin, of that doublet pied,
Could make a kirtle rare."

V

Next, Marmion mark'd the Celtic race,
Of different language, form, and face,
A various race of man;
Just then the Chiefs their tribes array'd,
And wild and garish semblance made,
The chequer'd trews, and belted plaid,
And varying notes the war-pipes bray'd,
To every varying clan;
Wild through their red or sable hair
Look'd out their eyes with savage stare,

On Marmion as he pass'd ;
Their legs above the knee were bare ;
Their frame was sinewy, short, and spare,
And harden'd to the blast ;
Of taller race, the chiefs they own
Were by the eagle's plumage known.
The hunted red-deer's undress'd hide
Their hairy buskins well supplied ;
The graceful bonnet deck'd their head :
Back from their shoulders hung the plaid ;
A broadsword of unwieldy length,
A dagger proved for edge and strength,
A studded targe they wore,
And quivers, bows, and shafts,—but, O !
Short was the shaft, and weak the bow,
To that which England bore.
The Isles-men carried at their backs
The ancient Danish battle-axe.
They raised a wild and wondering cry,
As with his guide rode Marmion by.
Loud were their clamouring tongues, as when
The clanging sea-fowl leave the fen,
And, with their cries discordant mix'd,
Grumbled and yell'd the pipes betwixt.

VI

Thus through the Scottish camp they pass'd,
And reach'd the City gate at last,
Where all around, a wakeful guard,
Arm'd burghers kept their watch and ward.
Well had they cause of jealous fear,
When lay encamp'd, in field so near,
The Borderer and the Mountaineer.
As through the bustling streets they go,
All was alive with martial show :
At every turn, with dinning clang,
The armourer's anvil clash'd and rang ;
Or toil'd the swarthy smith, to wheel
The bar that arms the charger's heel ;
Or axe, or falchion, to the side
Of jarring grindstone was applied.
Page, groom, and squire, with hurrying pace,

Through street, and lane, and market-place,
Bore lance, or casque, or sword;
While burghers, with important face,
Described each new-come lord,
Discuss'd his lineage, told his name,
His following, and his warlike fame.
The Lion led to lodging meet,
Which high o'erlooked the crowded street;
There must the Baron rest,
Till past the hour of vesper tide,
And then to Holy-Rood must ride,—
Such was the King's behest.
Meanwhile the Lion's care assigns
A banquet rich, and costly wines,
To Marmion and his train;
And when the appointed hour succeeds,
The Baron dons his peaceful weeds,
And following Lindesay as he leads,
The palace-halls they gain.

VII

Old Holy-Rood rung merrily,
That night, with wassell, mirth, and glee:
King James within her princely bower
Feasted the Chiefs of Scotland's power,
Summon'd to spend the parting hour;
For he had charged, that his array
Should southward march by break of day.
Well loved that splendid Monarch aye
The banquet and the song,
By day the tourney, and by night
The merry dance, traced fast and light,
The maskers quaint, the pageant bright,
The revel loud and long.
This feast outshone his banquets past;
It was his blithest—and his last.
The dazzling lamps, from gallery gay,
Cast on the Court a dancing ray;
Here to the harp did minstrels sing;
There ladies touch'd a softer string;
With long-ear'd cap, and motley vest,
The licensed fool retail'd his jest;

His magic tricks the juggler plied;
At dice and draughts the gallants vied;
While some, in close recess apart,
Courted the ladies of their heart,
Nor courted them in vain;
For often, in the parting hour,
Victorious Love asserts his power
O'er coldness and disdain;
And flinty is her heart, can view
To battle march a lover true—
Can hear, perchance, his last adieu,
Nor own her share of pain.

VIII

Through this mix'd crowd of glee and game,
The King to greet Lord Marmion came,
While, reverent, all made room.
An easy task it was, I trow,
King James's manly form to know,
Although, his courtesy to show,
He doff'd, to Marmion bending low,
His broider'd cap and plume.
For royal was his garb and mien,
His cloak, of crimson velvet piled,
Trimm'd with the fur of martin wild;
His vest of changeful satin sheen,
The dazzled eye beguiled;
His gorgeous collar hung adown,
Wrought with the badge of Scotland's crown,
The thistle brave, of old renown:
His trusty blade, Toledo right,
Descended from a baldric bright;
White were his buskins, on the heel
His spurs inlaid of gold and steel;
His bonnet, all of crimson fair,
Was button'd with a ruby rare:
And Marmion deem'd he ne'er had seen
A prince of such a noble mien.

IX

The Monarch's form was middle size;
For feat of strength, or exercise,

Shaped in proportion fair;
And hazel was his eagle eye,
And auburn of the darkest dye,
His short curl'd beard and hair.
Light was his footstep in the dance,
And firm his stirrup in the lists;
And, oh! he had that merry glance,
That seldom lady's heart resists.
Lightly from fair to fair he flew,
And loved to plead, lament, and sue;—
Suit lightly won, and short-lived pain,
For monarchs seldom sigh in vain.
I said he joy'd in banquet bower;
But, 'mid his mirth, 'twas often strange,
How suddenly his cheer would change,
His look o'ercast and lower,
If, in a sudden turn, he felt
The pressure of his iron belt,
That bound his breast in penance pain,
In memory of his father slain.[1]
Even so 'twas strange how, evermore,
Soon as the passing pang was o'er,
Forward he rush'd, with double glee,
Into the stream of revelry:
Thus, dim-seen object of affright
Startles the courser in his flight,
And half he halts, half springs aside;
But feels the quickening spur applied,
And, straining on the tighten'd rein,
Scours doubly swift o'er hill and plain.

X

O'er James's heart, the courtiers say,
Sir Hugh the Heron's wife held sway:
To Scotland's Court she came,
To be a hostage for her lord,
Who Cessford's gallant heart had gored,
And with the King to make accord,
Had sent his lovely dame.
Nor to that lady free alone

1 James IV. wore an iron belt in penance for his share in his father's death, adding certain ounces to the weight every year that he lived.

Did the gay King allegiance own;
For the fair Queen of France
Sent him a turquois ring and glove,
And charged him, as her knight and love,
For her to break a lance;
And strike three strokes with Scottish brand,
And march three miles on Southron land,
And bid the banners of his band
In English breezes dance.
And thus, for France's Queen he drest
His manly limbs in mailed vest;
And thus admitted English fair
His inmost counsels still to share;
And thus, for both, he madly plann'd
The ruin of himself and land!
And yet, the sooth to tell,
Nor England's fair, nor France's Queen,
Were worth one pearl-drop, bright and sheen,
From Margaret's eyes that fell,—
His own Queen Margaret, who, in Lithgow's bower,
All lonely sat, and wept the weary hour.

XI

The Queen sits lone in Lithgow pile,
And weeps the weary day,
The war against her native soil,
Her Monarch's risk in battle broil:—
And in gay Holy-Rood, the while,
Dame Heron rises with a smile
Upon the harp to play.
Fair was her rounded arm, as o'er
The strings her fingers flew;
And as she touch'd and tuned them all,
Ever her bosom's rise and fall
Was plainer given to view;
For, all for heat, was laid aside
Her wimple, and her hood untied.
And first she pitch'd her voice to sing,
Then glanced her dark eye on the King,
And then around the silent ring;
And laugh'd, and blush'd, and oft did say

Her pretty oath, by Yea, and Nay,
She could not, would not, durst not play!
At length, upon the harp, with glee,
Mingled with arch simplicity,
A soft, yet lively, air she rung,
While thus the wily lady sung:—

XII

LOCHINVAR

Lady Heron's Song

O, young Lochinvar * is come out of the west,
Through all the wide Border his steed was the best;
And save his good broadsword, he weapons had none,
He rode all unarm'd, and he rode all alone.
So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war,
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

He staid not for brake, and he stopp'd not for stone,
He swam the Esk river where ford there was none;
But ere he alighted at Netherby gate,
The bride had consented, the gallant came late:
For a laggard in love, and a dastard in war,
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.

So boldly he enter'd the Netherby Hall,
Among bride's-men, and kinsmen, and brothers, and all:
Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his sword
(For the poor craven bridegroom said never a word),
"O come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?"—

"I long woo'd your daughter, my suit you denied;—
Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide—
And now am I come, with this lost love of mine,
To lead but one measure, drink one cup of wine.
There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by far,
That would gladly be bride to the young Lochinvar."

The bride kiss'd the goblet: the knight took it up,
He quaff'd off the wine, and he threw down the cup.
She look'd down to blush, and she look'd up to sigh,
With a smile on her lips, and a tear in her eye.

He took her soft hand, ere her mother could bar,—
"Now tread we a measure!" said young Lochinvar.

So stately his form, and so lovely her face,
That never a hall such a galliard did grace;
While her mother did fret, and her father did fume,
And the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet and plume;
And the bride-maidens whisper'd, "'Twere better by far,
To have match'd our fair cousin with young Lochinvar."

One touch to her hand, and one word in her ear,
When they reach'd the hall-door, and the charger stood near;
So light to the croupe the fair lady he swung,
So light to the saddle before her he sprung!
"She is won! we are gone, over bank, bush, and scaur;
They'll have fleet steeds that follow," quoth young Lochinvar.

There was mounting 'mong Græmes of the Netherby clan;
Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and they ran:
There was racing and chasing, on Cannobie Lee,
But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did they see.
So daring in love, and so dauntless in war,
Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar?

XIII

The Monarch o'er the siren hung,
And beat the measure as she sung;
And, pressing closer, and more near,
He whisper'd praises in her ear.
In loud applause the courtiers vied;
And ladies wink'd, and spoke aside.
The witching dame to Marmion threw
A glance, where seem'd to reign
The pride that claims applauses due,
And of her royal conquest too,
A real or feign'd disdain:

Familiar was the look, and told,
Marmion and she were friends of old.
The King observed their meeting eyes,
With something like displeased surprise;
For monarchs ill can rivals brook,
Even in a word, or smile, or look.
Straight took he forth the parchment broad,
Which Marmion's high commission show'd:
"Our Borders sack'd by many a raid,
Our peaceful liegemen robb'd," he said;
"On day of truce our Warden slain,
Stout Barton kill'd, his vessels ta'en—
Unworthy were we here to reign,
Should these for vengeance cry in vain;
Our full defiance, hate, and scorn,
Our herald has to Henry borne."

XIV

He paused, and led where Douglas stood,
And with stern eye the pageant view'd:
I mean that Douglas, sixth of yore,
Who coronet of Angus bore,
And, when his blood and heart were high,
Did the third James in camp defy,
And all his minions led to die
On Lauder's dreary flat:
Princes and favourites long grew tame,
And trembled at the homely name
Of Archibald Bell-the-Cat;[1]
The same who left the dusky vale
Of Hermitage * in Liddisdale,
Its dungeons, and its towers,
Where Bothwell's turrets brave the air,
And Bothwell bank is blooming fair,

[1] At a conference of Scottish nobles held to consider how to get rid of James III.'s favourites, one of them, when there was some hesitation, sarcastically told the apologue of the Cat and the Mice. Once upon a time in an assembly of mice it was decided that it would be an excellent thing to hang a bell upon the cat's neck, so that they might have notice of his coming. But the scheme fell through, because none of them dared to undertake the task of fastening the bell. "I understand the moral," Angus said, "and that what we propose may not lack execution, I will *bell the cat.*"

To fix his princely bowers.
Though now, in age, he had laid down
His armour for the peaceful gown,
And for a staff his brand,
Yet often would flash forth the fire,
That could, in youth, a monarch's ire
And minion's pride withstand;
And even that day, at council board,
Unapt to soothe his sovereign's mood,
Against the war had Angus stood,
And chafed his royal lord.

XV

His giant-form, like ruin'd tower,
Though fall'n its muscles' brawny vaunt,
Huge-boned, and tall, and grim, and gaunt,
Seem'd o'er the gaudy scene to lower:
His locks and beard in silver grew;
His eyebrows kept their sable hue.
Near Douglas when the Monarch stood,
His bitter speech he thus pursued:
"Lord Marmion, since these letters say
That in the North you needs must stay,
While slightest hopes of peace remain,
Uncourteous speech it were, and stern,
To say—Return to Lindisfarne,
Until my herald come again.—
Then rest you in Tantallon Hold;[1]
Your host shall be the Douglas bold,—
A chief unlike his sires of old.
He wears their motto on his blade,
Their blazon o'er his towers display'd;
Yet loves his sovereign to oppose,
More than to face his country's foes.
And, I bethink me, by St. Stephen,
But e'en this morn to me was given
A prize, the first-fruits of the war,
Ta'en by a galley from Dunbar,
A bevy of the maids of Heaven.

[1] The ruins stand on a high rock projecting into the sea, about two miles east of North Berwick.

Under your guard, these holy maids
Shall safe return to cloister shades,
And, while they at Tantallon stay,
Requiem for Cochrane's soul may say."
And, with the slaughter'd favourite's name,
Across the Monarch's brow there came
A cloud of ire, remorse, and shame.

XVI

In answer nought could Angus speak ;
His proud heart swell'd wellnigh to break :
He turn'd aside, and down his cheek
A burning tear there stole.
His hand the Monarch sudden took,
That sight his kind heart could not brook :
"Now, by the Bruce's soul,
Angus, my hasty speech forgive !
For sure as doth his spirit live,
As he said of the Douglas old,
I well may say of you,—
That never king did subject hold,
In speech more free, in war more bold,
More tender and more true :
Forgive me, Douglas, once again."—
And, while the King his hand did strain,
The old man's tears fell down like rain.
To seize the moment Marmion tried,
And whisper'd to the King aside :
"Oh ! let such tears unwonted plead
For respite short from dubious deed !
A child will weep a bramble's smart,
A maid to see her sparrow part,
A stripling for a woman's heart :
But woe awaits a country, when
She sees the tears of bearded men.
Then, oh ! what omen, dark and high,
When Douglas wets his manly eye !"

XVII

Displeased was James, that stranger view'd
And tamper'd with his changing mood.
"Laugh those that can, weep those that may,"

Thus did the fiery Monarch say,
"Southward I march by break of day;
And if within Tantallon strong,
The good Lord Marmion tarries long,
Perchance our meeting next may fall
At Tamworth, in his castle-hall."—
The haughty Marmion felt the taunt,
And answer'd, grave, the royal vaunt:
"Much honour'd were my humble home,
If in its halls King James should come;
But Nottingham has archers good,
And Yorkshire men are stern of mood;
Northumbrian prickers wild and rude.
On Derby hills the paths are steep;
In Ouse and Tyne the fords are deep;
And many a banner will be torn,
And many a knight to earth be borne,
And many a sheaf of arrows spent,
Ere Scotland's King shall cross the Trent:
Yet pause, brave Prince, while yet you may!"—
The Monarch lightly turn'd away,
And to his nobles loud did call,—
"Lords, to the dance,—a hall! a hall!" [1]
Himself his cloak and sword flung by,
And led Dame Heron gallantly;
And minstrels, at the royal order,
Rung out—"Blue Bonnets o'er the Border."

XVIII

Leave we these revels now, to tell
What to Saint Hilda's maids befell,
Whose galley, as they sail'd again
To Whitby, by a Scot was ta'en.
Now at Dun-Edin did they bide,
Till James should of their fate decide;
And soon, by his command,
Were gently summon'd to prepare
To journey under Marmion's care,
As escort honour'd, safe, and fair,
Again to English land.

[1] The ancient cry to make room for a dance, or pageant.

The Abbess told her chaplet o'er,
Nor knew which saint she should implore;
For, when she thought of Constance, sore
She fear'd Lord Marmion's mood.
And judge what Clara must have felt!
The sword, that hung in Marmion's belt,
Had drunk De Wilton's blood.
Unwittingly, King James had given,
As guard to Whitby's shades,
The man most dreaded under Heaven
By these defenceless maids:
Yet what petition could avail,
Or who would listen to the tale
Of woman, prisoner, and nun,
'Mid bustle of a war begun?
They deem'd it hopeless to avoid
The convoy of their dangerous guide.

XIX

Their lodging, so the King assign'd,
To Marmion's, as their guardian, join'd;
And thus it fell, that, passing nigh,
The Palmer caught the Abbess' eye,
Who warn'd him by a scroll,
She had a secret to reveal,
That much concern'd the Church's weal,
And health of sinner's soul;
And, with deep charge of secrecy,
She named a place to meet,
Within an open balcony,
That hung from dizzy pitch, and high,
Above the stately street;
To which, as common to each home,
At night they might in secret come.

XX

At night, in secret, there they came,
The Palmer and the holy Dame.
The moon among the clouds rose high,
And all the city hum was by.
Upon the street, where late before
Did din of war and warriors roar,

You might have heard a pebble fall,
A beetle hum, a cricket sing,
An owlet flap his boding wing
On Giles's steeple tall.
The antique buildings, climbing high,
Whose Gothic frontlets sought the sky,
Were here wrapt deep in shade ;
There on their brows the moonbeam broke,
Through the faint wreaths of silvery smoke,
And on the casements play'd.
And other light was none to see,
Save torches gliding far,—
Before some chieftain of degree,
Who left the royal revelry
To bowne him for the war.—
A solemn scene the Abbess chose ;
A solemn hour, her secret to disclose.

XXI

" O, holy Palmer ! " she began,—
" For sure he must be sainted man,
Whose blessed feet have trod the ground
Where the Redeemer's tomb is found,—
For His dear Church's sake, my tale
Attend, nor deem of light avail,
Though I must speak of worldly love,—
How vain to those who wed above !—
De Wilton and Lord Marmion woo'd
Clara de Clare, of Gloster's blood
(Idle it were of Whitby's dame,
To say of that same blood I came) ;
And once, when jealous rage was high,
Lord Marmion said despiteously
Wilton was traitor in his heart,
And had made league with Martin Swart,
When he came here on Simnel's part ;
And only cowardice did restrain
His rebel aid on Stokefield's plain,—
And down he threw his glove :—the thing
Was tried, as wont, before the King ;
Where frankly did De Wilton own,
That Swart in Gueldres he had known ;

And that between them then there went
Some scroll of courteous compliment.
For this he to his castle sent;
But when his messenger return'd,
Judge how De Wilton's fury burn'd!
For in his packet there were laid
Letters that claim'd disloyal aid,
And proved King Henry's cause betray'd.
His fame, thus blighted, in the field
He strove to clear, by spear and shield;—
To clear his fame in vain he strove,
For wondrous are His ways above!
Perchance some form was unobserved;
Perchance in prayer, or faith, he swerved;
Else how could guiltless champion quail,
Or how the blessed ordeal fail?

XXII

"His squire, who now De Wilton saw
As recreant doom'd to suffer law,
Repentant, own'd in vain,
That, while he had the scrolls in care,
A stranger maiden, passing fair,
Had drench'd him with a beverage rare;
His words no faith could gain.
With Clare alone he credence won,
Who, rather than wed Marmion,
Did to Saint Hilda's shrine repair,
To give our house her livings fair,
And die a vestal vot'ress there.
The impulse from the earth was given,
But bent her to the paths of heaven.
A purer heart, a lovelier maid,
Ne'er shelter'd her in Whitby's shade,
No, not since Saxon Edelfled;
Only one trace of earthly strain,
That for her lover's loss
She cherishes a sorrow vain,
And murmurs at the cross.—
And then her heritage;—it goes
Along the banks of Tame;
Deep fields of grain the reaper mows,

In meadows rich the heifer lows,
The falconer and huntsman knows
Its woodlands for the game.
Shame were it to Saint Hilda dear,
And I, her humble vot'ress here,
Should do a deadly sin,
Her temple spoil'd before mine eyes,
If this false Marmion such a prize
By my consent should win;
Yet hath our boisterous Monarch sworn
That Clare shall from our house be torn;
And grievous cause have I to fear,
Such mandate doth Lord Marmion bear.

XXIII

"Now, prisoner, helpless, and betray'd
To evil power, I claim thine aid,
By every step that thou hast trod
To holy shrine and grotto dim,
By every martyr's tortured limb,
By angel, saint, and seraphim,
And by the Church of God!
For mark:—When Wilton was betray'd,
And with his squire forged letters laid,
She was, alas! that sinful maid
By whom the deed was done,—
O! shame and horror to be said!—
She was a perjured nun!
No clerk in all the land, like her,
Traced quaint and varying character.
Perchance you may a marvel deem,
That Marmion's paramour
(For such vile thing she was) should scheme
Her lover's nuptial hour;
But o'er him thus she hoped to gain,
As privy to his honour's stain,
Illimitable power:
For this she secretly retain'd
Each proof that might the plot reveal,
Instructions with his hand and seal;
And thus Saint Hilda deign'd,
Through sinners' perfidy impure,

Her house's glory to secure,
And Clare's immortal weal.

XXIV

"'Twere long, and needless, here to tell,
How to my hand these papers fell;
With me they must not stay.
Saint Hilda keep her Abbess true!
Who knows what outrage he might do,
While journeying by the way?—
O, blessed Saint, if e'er again
I venturous leave thy calm domain,
To travel or by land or main,
Deep penance may I pay!—
Now, saintly Palmer, mark my prayer:
I give this packet to thy care,
For thee to stop they will not dare;
And O! with cautious speed,
To Wolsey's hand the papers bring,
That he may show them to the King:
And, for thy well-earn'd meed,
Thou holy man, at Whitby's shrine
A weekly mass shall still be thine,
While priests can sing and read.—
What ail'st thou?—Speak!"—For as he took
The charge, a strong emotion shook
His frame; and, ere reply,
They heard a faint, yet shrilly tone,
Like distant clarion feebly blown,
That on the breeze did die;
And loud the Abbess shriek'd in fear,
"Saint Withold, save us!—What is here?
Look at yon City Cross!
See on its battled tower appear
Phantoms, that scutcheons seem to rear,
And blazon'd banners toss!"—

XXV

Dun-Edin's Cross, a pillar'd stone,
Rose on a turret octagon;
(But now is razed that monument,*
Whence royal edict rang,

And voice of Scotland's law was sent
In glorious trumpet-clang.
O ! be his tomb as lead to lead,
Upon its dull destroyer's head !—
A minstrel's malison is said.)—
Then on its battlements they saw
A vision, passing Nature's law,
Strange, wild, and dimly seen ;
Figures that seem'd to rise and die,
Gibber and sign, advance and fly,
While nought confirm'd could ear or eye
Discern of sound or mien.
Yet darkly did it seem, as there
Heralds and Pursuivants prepare,
With trumpet sound and blazon fair,
A summons to proclaim :
But indistinct the pageant proud,
As fancy forms of midnight cloud,
When flings the moon upon her shroud
A wavering tinge of flame ;
It flits, expands, and shifts, till loud,
From midmost of the spectre crowd,
This awful summons came :—

XXVI

" Prince, prelate, potentate, and peer,
Whose names I now shall call,
Scottish, or foreigner, give ear ;
Subjects of him who sent me here,
At his tribunal to appear,
I summon one and all :
I cite you by each deadly sin,
That e'er hath soil'd your hearts within :
I cite you by each brutal lust,
That e'er defiled your earthly dust,—
By wrath, by pride, by fear,
By each o'er-mastering passion's tone,
By the dark grave, and dying groan !
When forty days are pass'd and gone,
I cite you, at your Monarch's throne,
To answer and appear."
Then thunder'd forth a roll of names ;

The first was thine, unhappy James!
Then all thy nobles came;
Crawford, Glencairn, Montrose, Argyle,
Ross, Bothwell, Forbes, Lennox, Lyle,—
Why should I tell their separate style?
Each chief of birth and fame,
Of Lowland, Highland, Border, Isle,
Fore-doom'd to Flodden's carnage pile,
Was cited there by name;
And Marmion, Lord of Fontenaye,
Of Lutterward, and Scrivelbaye;
De Wilton, erst of Aberley,
The self-same thundering voice did say.—
But then another spoke:
"Thy fatal summons I deny,
And thine infernal Lord defy,
Appealing me to Him on high,
Who burst the sinner's yoke."
At that dread accent, with a scream,
Parted the pageant like a dream,
The summoner was gone.
Prone on her face the Abbess fell,
And fast, and fast, her beads did tell;
Her nuns came, startled by the yell,
And found her there alone.
She mark'd not, at the scene aghast,
What time, or how, the Palmer pass'd.

XXVII

Shift we the scene.—The camp doth move,
Dun-Edin's streets are empty now,
Save when, for weal of those they love,
To pray the prayer and vow the vow,
The tottering child, the anxious fair,
The grey-hair'd sire, with pious care,
To chapels and to shrines repair—
Where is the Palmer now? and where
The Abbess, Marmion, and Clare?—
Bold Douglas! to Tantallon fair
They journey in thy charge:
Lord Marmion rode on his right hand,
The Palmer still was with the band;

Angus, like Lindesay, did command,
That none should roam at large.
But in that Palmer's alter'd mien
A wondrous change might now be seen;
Freely he spoke of war,
Of marvels wrought by single hand,
When lifted for a native land;
And still look'd high, as if he plann'd
Some desperate deed afar.
His courser would he feed and stroke,
And, tucking up his sable frocke,
Would first his mettle bold provoke,
Then soothe or quell his pride.
Old Hubert said, that never one
He saw, except Lord Marmion,
A steed so fairly ride.

XXVIII

Some half-hour's march behind, there came,
By Eustace govern'd fair,
A troop escorting Hilda's Dame,
With all her nuns, and Clare.
No audience had Lord Marmion sought;
Ever he fear'd to aggravate
Clara de Clare's suspicious hate;
And safer 'twas, he thought,
To wait till, from the nuns removed,
The influence of kinsmen loved,
And suit by Henry's self approved,
Her slow consent had wrought.
His was no flickering flame, that dies
Unless when fann'd by looks and sighs,
And lighted oft at lady's eyes;
He long'd to stretch his wide command
O'er luckless Clara's ample land:
Besides, when Wilton with him vied,
Although the pang of humbled pride
The place of jealousy supplied,
Yet conquest, by that meanness won
He almost loath'd to think upon,
Led him, at times, to hate the cause
Which made him burst through honour's laws.

If e'er he loved, 'twas her alone,
Who died within that vault of stone.

XXIX

And now, when close at hand they saw
North Berwick's town, and lofty Law,
Fitz-Eustace bade them pause a while,
Before a venerable pile,
Whose turrets view'd, afar,
The lofty Bass, the Lambie Isle,
The ocean's peace or war.
At tolling of a bell, forth came
The convent's venerable Dame,
And pray'd Saint Hilda's Abbess rest
With her, a loved and honour'd guest,
Till Douglas should a bark prepare
To waft her back to Whitby fair.
Glad was the Abbess, you may guess,
And thank'd the Scottish Prioress;
And tedious were to tell, I ween,
The courteous speech that pass'd between.
O'erjoy'd the nuns their palfreys leave;
But when fair Clara did intend,
Like them, from horseback to descend,
Fitz-Eustace said,—"I grieve,
Fair lady, grieve e'en from my heart,
Such gentle company to part;—
Think not discourtesy,
But lords' commands must be obey'd;
And Marmion and the Douglas said,
That you must wend with me.
Lord Marmion hath a letter broad,
Which to the Scottish Earl he show'd,
Commanding that, beneath his care,
Without delay, you shall repair
To your good kinsman, Lord Fitz-Clare."

XXX

The startled Abbess loud exclaim'd;
But she, at whom the blow was aim'd,
Grew pale as death, and cold as lead,—
She deem'd she heard her death-doom read.

"Cheer thee, my child!" the Abbess said,
"They dare not tear thee from my hand,
To ride alone with armed band."—
"Nay, holy mother, nay,"
Fitz-Eustace said, "the lovely Clare
Will be in Lady Angus' care,
In Scotland while we stay;
And, when we move, an easy ride
Will bring us to the English side,
Female attendance to provide
Befitting Gloster's heir:
Nor thinks nor dreams my noble lord,
By slightest look, or act, or word,
To harass Lady Clare.
Her faithful guardian he will be,
Nor sue for slightest courtesy
That e'en to stranger falls,
Till he shall place her, safe and free,
Within her kinsman's halls."
He spoke, and blush'd with earnest grace;
His faith was painted on his face,
And Clare's worst fear relieved.
The Lady Abbess loud exclaim'd
On Henry, and the Douglas blamed,
Entreated, threaten'd, grieved;
To martyr, saint, and prophet pray'd,
Against Lord Marmion inveigh'd,
And call'd the Prioress to aid,
To curse with candle, bell, and book.
Her head the grave Cistertian shook:
"The Douglas, and the King," she said,
"In their commands will be obey'd;
Grieve not, nor dream that harm can fall
The maiden in Tantallon hall."

XXXI

The Abbess, seeing strife was vain,
Assumed her wonted state again,—
For much of state she had,—
Composed her veil, and raised her head,
And—"Bid," in solemn voice she said,
"Thy master, bold and bad,

The records of his house turn o'er,
And, when he shall there written see,
That one of his own ancestry
Drove the Monks forth of Coventry,
Bid him his fate explore!
Prancing in pride of earthly trust,
His charger hurl'd him to the dust,
And, by a base plebeian thrust,
He died his band before.
God judge 'twixt Marmion and me;
He is a Chief of high degree,
And I a poor recluse:
Yet oft, in holy writ, we see
Even such weak minister as me
May the oppressor bruise:
For thus, inspired, did Judith slay
The mighty in his sin,
And Jael thus, and Deborah——"
Here hasty Blount broke in:
"Fitz-Eustace, we must march our band:
St. Anton' fire thee! wilt thou stand
All day, with bonnet in thy hand,
To hear the Lady preach?
By this good light! if thus we stay,
Lord Marmion, for our fond delay,
Will sharper sermon teach.
Come, don thy cap, and mount thy horse;
The Dame must patience take perforce."—

XXXII

"Submit we then to force," said Clare,
"But let this barbarous lord despair
His purposed aim to win;
Let him take living, land, and life;
But to be Marmion's wedded wife
In me were deadly sin:
And if it be the King's decree,
That I must find no sanctuary,
In that inviolable dome,
Where even a homicide might come,
And safely rest his head,
Though at its open portals stood,

Thirsting to pour forth blood for blood,
The kinsmen of the dead;
Yet one asylum is my own
Against the dreaded hour;
A low, a silent, and a lone,
Where kings have little power.
One victim is before me there.—
Mother, your blessing, and in prayer
Remember your unhappy Clare!"
Loud weeps the Abbess, and bestows
Kind blessings many a one:
Weeping and wailing loud arose,
Round patient Clare, the clamorous woes
Of every simple nun.
His eyes the gentle Eustace dried,
And scarce rude Blount the sight could bide.
Then took the squire her rein,
And gently led away her steed,
And, by each courteous word and deed,
To cheer her strove in vain.

XXXIII

But scant three miles the band had rode,
When o'er a height they pass'd,
And, sudden, close before them show'd
His towers, Tantallon vast;
Broad, massive, high, and stretching far,
And held impregnable in war.
On a projecting rock they rose,
And round three sides the ocean flows,
The fourth did battled walls enclose,
And double mound and fosse.
By narrow drawbridge, outworks strong,
Through studded gates, an entrance long,
To the main court they cross.
It was a wide and stately square:
Around were lodgings, fit and fair,
And towers of various form,
Which on the court projected far,
And broke its lines quadrangular.
Here was square keep, there turret high,
Or pinnacle that sought the sky,

Whence oft the Warder could descry
The gathering ocean-storm.

XXXIV

Here did they rest.—The princely care
Of Douglas, why should I declare,
Or say they met reception fair?
Or why the tidings say,
Which, varying, to Tantallon came,
By hurrying posts, or fleeter fame,
With every varying day?
And, first, they heard King James had won
Etall, and Wark, and Ford; and then,
That Norham Castle strong was ta'en.
At that sore marvell'd Marmion;—
And Douglas hoped his Monarch's hand
Would soon subdue Northumberland:
But whisper'd news there came,
That, while his host inactive lay,
And melted by degrees away,
King James was dallying off the day
With Heron's wily dame.—
Such acts to chronicles I yield;
Go seek them there, and see:
Mine is a tale of Flodden Field,
And not a history.—
At length they heard the Scottish host
On that high ridge had made their post,
Which frowns o'er Millfield Plain;
And that brave Surrey many a band
Had gather'd in the Southern land,
And march'd into Northumberland,
And camp at Wooler ta'en.
Marmion, like charger in the stall,
That hears, without, the trumpet-call,
Began to chafe, and swear:—
"A sorry thing to hide my head
In castle, like a fearful maid,
When such a field is near!
Needs must I see this battle-day:
Death to my fame if such a fray
Were fought, and Marmion away!

The Douglas, too, I wot not why,
Hath 'bated of his courtesy:
No longer in his halls I'll stay."
Then bade his band they should array
For march against the dawning day.

## Introduction to Canto Sixth

### To RICHARD HEBER, Esq.[1]

*Mertoun-House,*[2] *Christmas.*

Heap on more wood!—the wind is chill;
But let it whistle as it will,
We'll keep our Christmas merry still.
Each age has deem'd the new-born year
The fittest time for festal cheer:
Even, heathen yet, the savage Dane
At Iol[3] more deep the mead did drain;
High on the beach his galleys drew,
And feasted all his pirate crew;
Then in his low and pine-built hall,
Where shields and axes deck'd the wall,
They gorged upon the half-dress'd steer;
Caroused in seas of sable beer;
While round, in brutal jest, were thrown
The half-gnaw'd rib, and marrow-bone:
Or listen'd all, in grim delight,
While Scalds yell'd out the joys of fight.
Then forth, in frenzy, would they hie,
While wildly-loose their red locks fly,
And dancing round the blazing pile,
They make such barbarous mirth the while,

[1] Brother of the Bishop and poet Heber, long M.P. for the University of Oxford. He placed his knowledge and his library of mediæval literature freely at Scott's disposal, as is acknowledged in the concluding lines of the epistle.

[2] Mertoun-House, near Dryburgh Abbey, was the seat of Hugh Scott of Harden, the head of the branch of Scotts to which the poet belonged. The poet frequently spent Christmas there.

[3] Christmas is still called *Yule* in Scotland.

As best might to the mind recall
The boisterous joys of Odin's hall.

And well our Christian sires of old
Loved when the year its course had roll'd,
And brought blithe Christmas back again,
With all his hospitable train.
Domestic and religious rite
Gave honour to the holy night;
On Christmas eve the bells were rung;
On Christmas eve the mass was sung:
That only night in all the year,
Saw the stoled priest the chalice rear.
The damsel donn'd her kirtle sheen;
The hall was dress'd with holly green;
Forth to the wood did merry-men go,
To gather in the misletoe.
Then open'd wide the Baron's hall
To vassal, tenant, serf, and all;
Power laid his rod of rule aside,
And Ceremony doff'd his pride.
The heir, with roses in his shoes,
That night might village partner choose;
The Lord, underogating, share
The vulgar game of "post and pair."
All hail'd, with uncontroll'd delight,
And general voice, the happy night,
That to the cottage, as the crown,
Brought tidings of salvation down.

The fire, with well-dried logs supplied,
Went roaring up the chimney wide;
The huge hall-table's oaken face,
Scrubb'd till it shone, the day to grace,
Bore then upon its massive board
No mark to part the squire and lord.
Then was brought in the lusty brawn,
By old blue-coated serving-man;
Then the grim boar's head frown'd on high,
Crested with bays and rosemary.
Well can the green-garb'd ranger tell,
How, when, and where, the monster fell;
What dogs before his death he tore,

And all the baiting of the boar.
The wassel round, in good brown bowls,
Garnish'd with ribbons, blithely trowls.
There the huge sirloin reek'd; hard by
Plum-porridge stood, and Christmas pie;
Nor fail'd old Scotland to produce,
At such high tide, her savoury goose.
Then came the merry maskers in,
And carols roar'd with blithesome din;
If unmelodious was the song,
It was a hearty note, and strong.
Who lists may in their mumming * see
Traces of ancient mystery;[1]
White shirts supplied the masquerade,
And smutted cheeks the visors made;
But, O! what maskers, richly dight,
Can boast of bosoms half so light!
England was merry England, when
Old Christmas brought his sports again.
'Twas Christmas broach'd the mightiest ale;
'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale;
A Christmas gambol oft could cheer
The poor man's heart through half the year.

Still linger, in our northern clime,
Some remnants of the good old time;
And still, within our valleys here,
We hold the kindred title dear,
Even when, perchance, its far-fetch'd claim,
To Southron ear sounds empty name;
For course of blood, our proverbs deem,
Is warmer than the mountain-stream.
And thus, my Christmas still I hold,
Where my great-grandsire came of old,
With amber beard, and flaxen hair,
And reverend apostolic air—
The feast and holy-tide to share,
And mix sobriety with wine,
And honest mirth with thoughts divine:

[1] The mediæval mystery-plays were dramatisations of Scripture story, played on certain holidays by companies of craftsmen, like the Ober Ammergau passion-play.

Small thought was his, in after time
E'er to be hitch'd into a rhyme.
The simple sire could only boast,
That he was loyal to his cost;
The banish'd race of kings revered,
And lost his land,—but kept his beard.

In these dear halls, where welcome kind
Is with fair liberty combined;
Where cordial friendship gives the hand,
And flies constraint the magic wand
Of the fair dame that rules the land,
Little we heed the tempest drear,
While music, mirth, and social cheer,
Speed on their wings the passing year.
And Mertoun's halls are fair e'en now,
When not a leaf is on the bough.
Tweed loves them well, and turns again,
As loath to leave the sweet domain,
And holds his mirror to her face,
And clips her with a close embrace:—
Gladly as he, we seek the dome,
And as reluctant turn us home.

How just that, at this time of glee,
My thoughts should, Heber, turn to thee!
For many a merry hour we've known,
And heard the chimes of midnight's tone.
Cease, then, my friend! a moment cease,
And leave these classic tomes in peace!
Of Roman and of Grecian lore,
Sure mortal brain can hold no more.
These ancients, as Noll Bluff might say,
"Were pretty fellows in their day";
But time and tide o'er all prevail—
On Christmas eve a Christmas tale—
Of wonder and of war—"Profane!
What! leave the lofty Latian strain,
Her stately prose, her verse's charms,
To hear the clash of rusty arms:
In Fairy Land or Limbo lost,
To jostle conjurer and ghost,

Goblin and witch!"—Nay, Heber dear,
Before you touch my charter, hear:
Though Leyden aids, alas! no more,
My cause with many-languaged lore,
This may I say:—in realms of death
Ulysses meets Alcides' *wraith*;*
Æneas, upon Thracia's shore,
The ghost of murder'd Polydore;
For omens, we in Livy cross,
At every turn, *locutus Bos.*
As grave and duly speaks that ox,
As if he told the price of stocks;
Or held, in Rome republican,
The place of Common-councilman.

All nations have their omens drear,
Their legends wild of woe and fear.
To Cambria look—the peasant see,
Bethink him of Glendowerdy,
And shun "the Spirit's Blasted Tree."
The Highlander, whose red claymore
The battle turn'd on Maida's shore,
Will, on a Friday morn, look pale,
If ask'd to tell a fairy tale:
He fears the vengeful Elfin King,
Who leaves that day his grassy ring:
Invisible to human ken,
He walks among the sons of men.

Didst e'er, dear Heber, pass along
Beneath the towers of Franchémont,
Which, like an eagle's nest in air,
Hang o'er the stream and hamlet fair?
Deep in their vaults, the peasants say,
A mighty treasure buried lay,
Amass'd through rapine and through wrong
By the last Lord of Franchémont.
The iron chest is bolted hard,
A huntsman sits, its constant guard;
Around his neck his horn is hung,
His hanger in his belt is slung;
Before his feet his blood-hounds lie:

An 'twere not for his gloomy eye,
Whose withering glance no heart can brook,
As true a huntsman doth he look,
As bugle e'er in brake did sound,
Or ever halloo'd to a hound.
To chase the fiend, and win the prize,
In that same dungeon ever tries
An aged necromantic priest;
It is an hundred years at least,
Since 'twixt them first the strife begun,
And neither yet has lost nor won.
And oft the Conjurer's words will make
The stubborn Demon groan and quake;
And oft the bands of iron break,
Or bursts one lock, that still amain,
Fast as 'tis open'd, shuts again.
That magic strife within the tomb
May last until the day of doom,
Unless the adept shall learn to tell
The very word that clench'd the spell,
When Franch'mont lock'd the treasure cell.
An hundred years are pass'd and gone,
And scarce three letters has he won.

Such general superstition may
Excuse for old Pitscottie[1] say;
Whose gossip history has given
My song the messenger from Heaven,
That warn'd, in Lithgow, Scotland's King,
Nor less the infernal summoning;
May pass the Monk of Durham's tale,
Whose demon fought in Gothic mail;
May pardon plead for Fordun grave,
Who told of Gifford's Goblin-Cave.
But why such instances to you,
Who, in an instant, can renew
Your treasured hoards of various lore,
And furnish twenty thousand more?
Hoards, not like theirs whose volumes rest
Like treasures in the Franch'mont chest,

[1] The Scotch historian who is Scott's quoted authority for several of the incidents in the poem.

While gripple owners still refuse
To others what they cannot use;
Give them the priest's whole century,
They shall not spell you letters three;
Their pleasure in the books the same
The magpie takes in pilfer'd gem.
Thy volumes, open as thy heart,
Delight, amusement, science, art,
To every ear and eye impart;
Yet who, of all who thus employ them,
Can like the owner's self enjoy them?—
But, hark! I hear the distant drum!
The day of Flodden Field is come.—
Adieu, dear Heber! life and health,
And store of literary wealth.

## CANTO SIXTH

### The Battle

I

While great events were on the gale,
And each hour brought a varying tale,
And the demeanour, changed and cold,
Of Douglas, fretted Marmion bold,
And, like the impatient steed of war,
He snuff'd the battle from afar;
And hopes were none, that back again
Herald should come from Terouenne,
Where England's King in leaguer lay,
Before decisive battle-day;
Whilst these things were, the mournful Clare
Did in the Dame's devotions share:
For the good Countess ceaseless pray'd
To Heaven and Saints, her sons to aid,
And, with short interval, did pass
From prayer to book, from book to mass,
And all in high Baronial pride,—
A life both dull and dignified;—

Yet as Lord Marmion nothing press'd
Upon her intervals of rest,
Dejected Clara well could bear
The formal state, the lengthen'd prayer,
Though dearest to her wounded heart
The hours that she might spend apart.

II

I said, Tantallon's dizzy steep
Hung o'er the margin of the deep.
Many a rude tower and rampart there
Repell'd the insult of the air,
Which, when the tempest vex'd the sky,
Half breeze, half spray, came whistling by.
Above the rest, a turret square
Did o'er its Gothic entrance bear,
Of sculpture rude, a stony shield;
The Bloody Heart was in the Field,
And in the chief three mullets stood,
The cognizance of Douglas blood.
The turret held a narrow stair,
Which, mounted, gave you access where
A parapet's embattled row
Did seaward round the castle go.
Sometimes in dizzy steps descending,
Sometimes in narrow circuit bending,
Sometimes in platform broad extending,
Its varying circle did combine
Bulwark, and bartizan, and line,
And bastion, tower, and vantage-coign:
Above the booming ocean leant
The far projecting battlement;
The billows burst, in ceaseless flow,
Upon the precipice below.
Where'er Tantallon faced the land,
Gate-works, and walls, were strongly mann'd;
No need upon the sea-girt side;
The steepy rock, and frantic tide,
Approach of human step denied;
And thus these lines, and ramparts rude,
Were left in deepest solitude.

III

And, for they were so lonely, Clare
Would to these battlements repair,
And muse upon her sorrows there,
And list the sea-bird's cry ;
Or slow, like noontide ghost, would glide
Along the dark-grey bulwarks' side,
And ever on the heaving tide
Look down with weary eye.
Oft did the cliff, and swelling main,
Recall the thoughts of Whitby's fane,—
A home she ne'er might see again ;
For she had laid adown,
So Douglas bade, the hood and veil,
And frontlet of the cloister pale,
And Benedictine gown :
It were unseemly sight, he said,
A novice out of convent shade.—
Now her bright locks, with sunny glow,
Again adorn'd her brow of snow ;
Her mantle rich, whose borders, round,
A deep and fretted broidery bound,
In golden foldings sought the ground ;
Of holy ornament, alone
Remain'd a cross with ruby stone ;
And often did she look
On that which in her hand she bore,
With velvet bound, and broider'd o'er,
Her breviary book.
In such a place, so lone, so grim,
At dawning pale, or twilight dim,
It fearful would have been
To meet a form so richly dress'd,
With book in hand, and cross on breast,
And such a woeful mien.
Fitz-Eustace, loitering with his bow,
To practise on the gull and crow,
Saw her, at distance, gliding slow,
And did by Mary swear,—
Some love-lorn Fay she might have been,
Or, in Romance, some spell-bound Queen ;

For ne'er, in work-day world, was seen
A form so witching fair.

IV

Once walking thus, at evening tide,
It chanced a gliding sail she spied,
And, sighing, thought—"The Abbess, there,
Perchance, does to her home repair;
Her peaceful rule, where Duty, free,
Walks hand in hand with Charity;
Where oft Devotion's tranced glow
Can such a glimpse of heaven bestow,
That the enraptured sisters see
High vision and deep mystery;
The very form of Hilda fair,
Hovering upon the sunny air,
And smiling on her votaries' prayer.
O! wherefore, to my duller eye,
Did still the Saint her form deny!
Was it, that, sear'd by sinful scorn,
My heart could neither melt nor burn?
Or lie my warm affections low,
With him that taught them first to glow?
Yet, gentle Abbess, well I knew,
To pay thy kindness grateful due,
And well could brook the mild command,
That ruled thy simple maiden band.
How different now! condemn'd to bide
My doom from this dark tyrant's pride.—
But Marmion has to learn, ere long,
That constant mind, and hate of wrong,
Descended to a feeble girl,
From Red De Clare, stout Gloster's Earl:
Of such a stem, a sapling weak,
He ne'er shall bend, although he break.

V

"But see!—what makes this armour here?"—
For in her path there lay
Targe, corslet, helm;—she view'd them near.—
"The breast-plate pierced!—Ay, much I fear,

Weak fence wert thou 'gainst foeman's spear,
That hath made fatal entrance here,
As these dark blood-gouts say.—
Thus Wilton! Oh! not corslet's ward,
Not truth, as diamond pure and hard,
Could be thy manly bosom's guard,
On yon disastrous day!"—
She raised her eyes in mournful mood,—
WILTON himself before her stood!
It might have seem'd his passing ghost,
For every youthful grace was lost;
And joy unwonted, and surprise,
Gave their strange wildness to his eyes.
Expect not, noble dames and lords,
That I can tell such scene in words:
What skilful limner e'er would choose
To paint the rainbow's varying hues,
Unless to mortal it were given
To dip his brush in dyes of heaven?
Far less can my weak line declare
Each changing passion's shade;
Brightening to rapture from despair,
Sorrow, surprise, and pity there,
And joy, with her angelic air,
And hope, that paints the future fair,
Their varying hues display'd:
Each o'er its rival's ground extending,
Alternate conquering, shifting, blending,
Till all, fatigued, the conflict yield,
And mighty Love retains the field.
Shortly I tell what then he said,
By many a tender word delay'd,
And modest blush, and bursting sigh,
And question kind, and fond reply:—

VI

De Wilton's History

"Forget we that disastrous day,
When senseless in the lists I lay.
Thence dragg'd,—but how I cannot know,
For sense and recollection fled,—

I found me on a pallet low,
Within my ancient beadsman's shed.
Austin,—remember'st thou, my Clare,
How thou didst blush, when the old man,
When first our infant love began,
Said we would make a matchless pair?—
Menials, and friends, and kinsmen fled
From the degraded traitor's bed,—
He only held my burning head,
And tended me for many a day,
While wounds and fever held their sway.
But far more needful was his care,
When sense return'd to wake despair;
For I did tear the closing wound,
And dash me frantic on the ground,
If e'er I heard the name of Clare.
At length, to calmer reason brought,
Much by his kind attendance wrought,
With him I left my native strand,
And, in a Palmer's weeds array'd,
My hated name and form to shade,
I journey'd many a land;
No more a lord of rank and birth,
But mingled with the dregs of earth.
Oft Austin for my reason fear'd,
When I would sit, and deeply brood
On dark revenge, and deeds of blood,
Or wild mad schemes uprear'd.
My friend at length fell sick, and said,
God would remove him soon:
And, while upon his dying bed,
He begg'd of me a boon—
If e'er my deadliest enemy
Beneath my brand should conquer'd lie,
Even then my mercy should awake,
And spare his life for Austin's sake.

VII

"Still restless as a second Cain,
To Scotland next my route was ta'en,
Full well the paths I knew.
Fame of my fate made various sound,

That death in pilgrimage I found,
That I had perish'd of my wound,—
None cared which tale was true:
And living eye could never guess
De Wilton in his Palmer's dress;
For now that sable slough is shed,
And trimm'd my shaggy beard and head,
I scarcely know me in the glass.
A chance most wondrous did provide,
That I should be that Baron's guide—
I will not name his name!—
Vengeance to God alone belongs;
But, when I think on all my wrongs,
My blood is liquid flame!
And ne'er the time shall I forget,
When, in a Scottish hostel set,
Dark looks we did exchange:
What were his thoughts I cannot tell;
But in my bosom muster'd Hell
Its plans of dark revenge.

VIII

"A word of vulgar augury,
That broke from me, I scarce knew why,
Brought on a village tale;
Which wrought upon his moody sprite,
And sent him armed forth by night.
I borrow'd steed and mail,
And weapons, from his sleeping band;
And, passing from a postern door,
We met, and counter'd hand to hand,—
He fell on Gifford-moor.
For the death-stroke my brand I drew
(O then my helmed head he knew,
The Palmer's cowl was gone),
Then had three inches of my blade
The heavy debt of vengeance paid,—
My hand the thought of Austin staid;
I left him there alone.—
O good old man! even from the grave
Thy spirit could thy master save:
If I had slain my foeman, ne'er

Had Whitby's Abbess, in her fear,
Given to my hand this packet dear,
Of power to clear my injured fame,
And vindicate De Wilton's name.—
Perchance you heard the Abbess tell
Of the strange pageantry of Hell,
That broke our secret speech—
It rose from the infernal shade,
Or featly was some juggle play'd,
A tale of peace to teach.
Appeal to Heaven I judged was best,
When my name came among the rest.

IX

"Now here, within Tantallon Hold,
To Douglas late my tale I told,
To whom my house was known of old.
Won by my proofs, his falchion bright
This eve anew shall dub me knight.
These were the arms that once did turn
The tide of fight on Otterburne,
And Harry Hotspur forced to yield,
When the Dead Douglas won the field.
These Angus gave—his armourer's care,
Ere morn, shall every breach repair;
For nought, he said, was in his halls,
But ancient armour on the walls,
And aged chargers in the stalls,
And women, priests, and grey-hair'd men;
The rest were all in Twisel glen.
And now I watch my armour here,
By law of arms, till midnight's near;
Then, once again a belted knight,
Seek Surrey's camp with dawn of light.

X

"There soon again we meet, my Clare!
This Baron means to guide thee there:
Douglas reveres his King's command,
Else would he take thee from his band.
And there thy kinsman, Surrey, too,
Will give De Wilton justice due.

Now meeter far for martial broil,
Firmer my limbs, and strung by toil,
Once more——" "O Wilton! must we then
Risk new-found happiness again,
Trust fate of arms once more?
And is there not an humble glen,
Where we, content and poor,
Might build a cottage in the shade,
A shepherd thou, and I to aid
Thy task on dale and moor?——
That reddening brow!—too well I know
Not even thy Clare can peace bestow,
While falsehood stains thy name:
Go then to fight! Clare bids thee go!
Clare can a warrior's feelings know,
And weep a warrior's shame;
Can Red Earl Gilbert's spirit feel,
Buckle the spurs upon thy heel,
And belt thee with thy brand of steel,
And send thee forth to fame!"

XI

That night, upon the rocks and bay,
The midnight moonbeam slumbering lay,
And pour'd its silver light, and pure,
Through loop-hole, and through embrazure,
Upon Tantallon tower and hall;
But chief where arched windows wide
Illuminate the chapel's pride,
The sober glances fall.
Much was their need; though seam'd with scars,
Two veterans of the Douglas' wars,
Though two grey priests were there,
And each a blazing torch held high,
You could not by their blaze descry
The chapel's carving fair.
Amid that dim and smoky light,
Chequering the silvery moonshine bright,
A bishop by the altar stood,
A noble lord of Douglas blood,
With mitre sheen, and rocquet white.
Yet show'd his meek and thoughtful eye

But little pride of prelacy;
More pleased that, in a barbarous age,
He gave rude Scotland Virgil's page,
Than that beneath his rule he held
The bishopric of fair Dunkeld.
Beside him ancient Angus stood,
Doff'd his furr'd gown, and sable hood:
O'er his huge form and visage pale,
He wore a cap and shirt of mail;
And lean'd his large and wrinkled hand
Upon the huge and sweeping brand
Which wont of yore, in battle fray,
His foeman's limbs to shred away,
As wood-knife lops the sapling spray.
He seem'd as, from the tombs around
Rising at judgment-day,
Some giant Douglas may be found
In all his old array;
So pale his face, so huge his limb,
So old his arms, his look so grim.

XII

Then at the altar Wilton kneels,
And Clare the spurs bound on his heels;
And think what next he must have felt,
At buckling of the falchion belt!
And judge how Clara changed her hue,
While fastening to her lover's side
A friend, which, though in danger tried,
He once had found untrue!
Then Douglas struck him with his blade:
"Saint Michael and Saint Andrew aid,
I dub thee knight.
Arise, Sir Ralph, De Wilton's heir!
For King, for Church, for Lady fair,
See that thou fight."—
And Bishop Gawain, as he rose,
Said—"Wilton! grieve not for thy woes,
Disgrace, and trouble;
For He, who honour best bestows,
May give thee double."—

De Wilton sobb'd, for sob he must—
"Where'er I meet a Douglas, trust
That Douglas is my brother!"—
"Nay, nay," old Angus said, "not so;
To Surrey's camp thou now must go,
Thy wrongs no longer smother.
I have two sons in yonder field;
And, if thou meet'st them under shield,
Upon them bravely—do thy worst;
And foul fall him that blenches first!"

XIII

Not far advanced was morning day,
When Marmion did his troop array
To Surrey's camp to ride;
He had safe-conduct for his band,
Beneath the royal seal and hand,
And Douglas gave a guide:
The ancient Earl, with stately grace,
Would Clara on her palfrey place,
And whisper'd in an under tone,
"Let the hawk stoop, his prey is flown."—
The train from out the castle drew,
But Marmion stopp'd to bid adieu:—
"Though something I might plain," he said,
"Of cold respect to stranger guest,
Sent hither by your King's behest,
While in Tantallon's towers I staid;
Part we in friendship from your land,
And, noble Earl, receive my hand."—
But Douglas round him drew his cloak,
Folded his arms, and thus he spoke:—
"My manors, halls, and bowers, shall still
Be open, at my Sovereign's will,
To each one whom he lists, howe'er
Unmeet to be the owner's peer.
My castles are my King's alone,
From turret to foundation-stone—
The hand of Douglas is his own;
And never shall in friendly grasp
The hand of such as Marmion clasp."—

XIV

Burn'd Marmion's swarthy cheek like fire,
And shook his very frame for ire,
And—"This to me!" he said—
"An 'twere not for thy hoary beard,
Such hand as Marmion's had not spared
To cleave the Douglas' head!
And, first, I tell thee, haughty Peer,
He, who does England's message here,
Although the meanest in her state,
May well, proud Angus, be thy mate:
And, Douglas, more I tell thee here,
Even in thy pitch of pride,
Here in thy hold, thy vassals near
(Nay, never look upon your lord,
And lay your hands upon your sword),
I tell thee, thou'rt defied!
And if thou saidst I am not peer
To any lord in Scotland here,
Lowland or Highland, far or near,
Lord Angus, thou hast lied!"—
On the Earl's cheek the flush of rage
O'ercame the ashen hue of age:
Fierce he broke forth,—"And darest thou then
To beard the lion in his den,
The Douglas in his hall?
And hopest thou hence unscathed to go?—
No, by Saint Bride of Bothwell, no!
Up drawbridge, grooms!—what, Warder, ho!
Let the portcullis fall."—
Lord Marmion turn'd,—well was his need,
And dash'd the rowels in his steed,
Like arrow through the archway sprung,
The ponderous grate behind him rung:
To pass there was such scanty room,
The bars, descending, razed his plume.

XV

The steed along the drawbridge flies,
Just as it trembled on the rise;

Nor lighter does the swallow skim
Along the smooth lake's level brim:
And when Lord Marmion reach'd his band,
He halts, and turns with clenched hand,
And shout of loud defiance pours,
And shook his gauntlet at the towers.
"Horse! horse!" the Douglas cried, "and chase!"
But soon he rein'd his fury's pace:
"A royal messenger he came,
Though most unworthy of the name.—
A letter forged! Saint Jude to speed!
Did ever knight so foul a deed!
At first in heart it liked me ill,
When the King praised his clerkly skill.
Thanks to Saint Bothan, son of mine,
Save Gawain,* ne'er could pen a line:
So swore I, and I swear it still,
Let my boy-bishop fret his fill.—
Saint Mary mend my fiery mood!
Old age ne'er cools the Douglas blood,
I thought to slay him where he stood.
'Tis pity of him too," he cried:
"Bold can he speak, and fairly ride;
I warrant him a warrior tried."
With this his mandate he recalls,
And slowly seeks his castle halls.

XVI

The day in Marmion's journey wore;
Yet, ere his passion's gust was o'er,
They cross'd the heights of Stanrig-moor.
His troop more closely there he scann'd,
And miss'd the Palmer from the band.—
"Palmer or not," young Blount did say,
"He parted at the peep of day;
Good sooth, it was in strange array."—
"In what array?" said Marmion, quick.
"My Lord, I ill can spell the trick;
But all night long, with clink and bang,
Close to my couch did hammers clang;
At dawn the falling drawbridge rang,
And from a loop-hole while I peep,

Old Bell-the-Cat came from the Keep,
Wrapp'd in a gown of sables fair,
As fearful of the morning air;
Beneath, when that was blown aside,
A rusty shirt of mail I spied,
By Archibald won in bloody work,
Against the Saracen and Turk:
Last night it hung not in the hall;
I thought some marvel would befall.
And next I saw them saddled lead
Old Cheviot forth, the Earl's best steed;
A matchless horse, though something old,
Prompt in his paces, cool and bold.
I heard the Sheriff Sholto say,
The Earl did much the Master pray
To use him on the battle-day;
But he preferr'd——" "Nay, Henry, cease!
Thou sworn horse-courser, hold thy peace.—
Eustace, thou bear'st a brain—I pray
What did Blount see at break of day?"

XVII

"In brief, my lord, we both descried
(For then I stood by Henry's side)
The Palmer mount, and outwards ride,
Upon the Earl's own favourite steed:
All sheathed he was in armour bright,
And much resembled that same knight,
Subdued by you in Cotswold fight:
Lord Angus wish'd him speed."—
The instant that Fitz-Eustace spoke,
A sudden light on Marmion broke;—
"Ah! dastard fool, to reason lost!"
He mutter'd; "'Twas nor fay nor ghost
I met upon the moonlight wold,
But living man of earthly mould.—
O dotage blind and gross!
Had I but fought as wont, one thrust
Had laid De Wilton in the dust,
My path no more to cross.—
How stand we now?—he told his tale
To Douglas; and with some avail;

'Twas therefore gloom'd his rugged brow.—
Will Surrey dare to entertain,
'Gainst Marmion, charge disproved and vain?
Small risk of that, I trow.
Yet Clare's sharp questions must I shun;
Must separate Constance from the Nun—
O, what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practise to deceive!
A Palmer too!—no wonder why
I felt rebuked beneath his eye:
I might have known there was but one,
Whose look could quell Lord Marmion.".

XVIII

Stung with these thoughts, he urged to speed
His troop, and reach'd, at eve, the Tweed,
Where Lennel's convent closed their march
(There now is left but one frail arch,
Yet mourn thou not its cells;
Our time a fair exchange has made;
Hard by, in hospitable shade,
A reverend pilgrim dwells,
Well worth the whole Bernardine brood,
That e'er wore sandal, frock, or hood).
Yet did Saint Bernard's Abbot there
Give Marmion entertainment fair,
And lodging for his train and Clare.
Next morn the Baron climb'd the tower,
To view afar the Scottish power,
Encamp'd on Flodden edge:
The white pavilions made a show,
Like remnants of the winter snow,
Along the dusky ridge.
Lord Marmion look'd:—at length his eye
Unusual movement might descry
Amid the shifting lines:
The Scottish host drawn out appears,
For, flashing on the hedge of spears,
The eastern sunbeam shines.
Their front now deepening, now extending;
Their flank inclining, wheeling, bending,
Now drawing back, and now descending,

The skilful Marmion well could know,
They watch'd the motions of some foe,
Who traversed on the plain below.

XIX

Even so it was. From Flodden ridge
The Scots beheld the English host
Leave Barmore-wood, their evening post,
And heedful watch'd them as they cross'd
The Till by Twisel Bridge.
High sight it is, and haughty, while
They dive into the deep defile;
Beneath the cavern'd cliff they fall,
Beneath the castle's airy wall.
By rock, by oak, by hawthorn-tree,
Troop after troop are disappearing;
Troop after troop their banners rearing
Upon the eastern bank you see.
Still pouring down the rocky den,
Where flows the sullen Till,
And rising from the dim-wood glen,
Standards on standards, men on men,
In slow succession still,
And, sweeping o'er the Gothic arch,
And pressing on, in ceaseless march,
To gain the opposing hill.
That morn, to many a trumpet clang,
Twisel! thy rock's deep echo rang;
And many a chief of birth and rank,
Saint Helen! at thy fountain drank.
Thy hawthorn glade, which now we see
In spring-tide bloom so lavishly,
Had then from many an axe its doom,
To give the marching columns room.

XX

And why stands Scotland idly now,*
Dark Flodden! on thy airy brow,
Since England gains the pass the while,
And struggles through the deep defile?
What checks the fiery soul of James?

Why sits that champion of the dames
Inactive on his steed,
And sees, between him and his land,
Between him and Tweed's southern strand,
His host Lord Surrey lead?
What 'vails the vain knight-errant's brand!—
O, Douglas, for thy leading wand!
Fierce Randolph, for thy speed!
O for one hour of Wallace wight,
Or well-skill'd Bruce, to rule the fight,
And cry—"Saint Andrew and our right!"
Another sight had seen that morn,
From Fate's dark book a leaf been torn,
And Flodden had been Bannockbourne!—
The precious hour has pass'd in vain,
And England's host has gain'd the plain;
Wheeling their march, and circling still,
Around the base of Flodden hill.

XXI

Ere yet the bands met Marmion's eye,
Fitz-Eustace shouted loud and high,
"Hark! hark! my lord, an English drum!
And see ascending squadrons come
Between Tweed's river and the hill,
Foot, horse, and cannon:—hap what hap,
My basnet to a prentice cap,
Lord Surrey's o'er the Till!—
Yet more! yet more! how far array'd
They file from out the hawthorn shade,
And sweep so gallant by!
With all their banners bravely spread,
And all their armour flashing high,
Saint George might waken from the dead,
To see fair England's standards fly."—
"Stint in thy prate," quoth Blount, "thou'dst best,
And listen to our lord's behest."—
With kindling brow Lord Marmion said,—
"This instant be our band array'd;
The river must be quickly cross'd,
That we may join Lord Surrey's host.

If fight King James,—as well I trust,
That fight he will, and fight he must,—
The Lady Clare behind our lines
Shall tarry, while the battle joins."

XXII

Himself he swift on horseback threw,
Scarce to the Abbot bade adieu;
Far less would listen to his prayer,
To leave behind the helpless Clare.
Down to the Tweed his band he drew,
And mutter'd, as the flood they view,
"The pheasant in the falcon's claw,
He scarce will yield to please a daw:
Lord Angus may the Abbot awe,
So Clare shall bide with me."
Then on that dangerous ford, and deep,
Where to the Tweed Leat's eddies creep,
He ventured desperately:
And not a moment will he bide,
Till squire, or groom, before him ride;
Headmost of all he stems the tide,
And stems it gallantly.
Eustace held Clare upon her horse,
Old Hubert led her rein,
Stoutly they braved the current's course,
And, though far downward driven per force,
The southern bank they gain;
Behind them, straggling, came to shore,
As best they might, the train:
Each o'er his head his yew-bow bore,
A caution not in vain;
Deep need that day that every string,
By wet unharm'd, should sharply ring.
A moment then Lord Marmion staid,
And breathed his steed, his men array'd,
Then forward moved his band,
Until, Lord Surrey's rear-guard won,
He halted by a Cross of Stone,
That, on a hillock standing lone,
Did all the field command.

XXIII

Hence might they see the full array
Of either host, for deadly fray;
Their marshall'd lines stretch'd east and west,
And fronted north and south,
And distant salutation pass'd
From the loud cannon mouth;
Not in the close successive rattle,
That breathes the voice of modern battle,
But slow and far between.—
The hillock gain'd, Lord Marmion staid:
"Here, by this Cross," he gently said,
"You well may view the scene.
Here shalt thou tarry, lovely Clare:
O! think of Marmion in thy prayer!—
Thou wilt not?—well,—no less my care
Shall, watchful, for thy weal prepare.—
You, Blount and Eustace, are her guard,
With ten pick'd archers of my train;
With England if the day go hard,
To Berwick speed amain.—
But if we conquer, cruel maid,
My spoils shall at your feet be laid,
When here we meet again."
He waited not for answer there,
And would not mark the maid's despair,
Nor heed the discontented look
From either squire; but spurr'd amain,
And, dashing through the battle plain,
His way to Surrey took.

XXIV

"——The good Lord Marmion, by my life!
Welcome to danger's hour!—
Short greeting serves in time of strife:—
Thus have I ranged my power:
Myself will rule this central host,
Stout Stanley fronts their right,
My sons command the vaward post,
With Brian Tunstall, stainless knight;
Lord Dacre, with his horsemen light,
Shall be in rear-ward of the fight,

And succour those that need it most.
Now, gallant Marmion, well I know,
Would gladly to the vanguard go;
Edmund, the Admiral, Tunstall there,
With thee their charge will blithely share;
There fight thine own retainers too,
Beneath De Burg, thy steward true."—
"Thanks, noble Surrey!" Marmion said,
Nor farther greeting there he paid;
But, parting like a thunderbolt,
First in the vanguard made a halt,
Where such a shout there rose
Of "Marmion! Marmion!" that the cry,
Up Flodden mountain shrilling high,
Startled the Scottish foes.

XXV

Blount and Fitz-Eustace rested still
With Lady Clare upon the hill;
On which (for far the day was spent)
The western sunbeams now were bent.
The cry they heard, its meaning knew,
Could plain their distant comrades view:
Sadly to Blount did Eustace say,
"Unworthy office here to stay!
No hope of gilded spurs to-day.—
But see! look up!—on Flodden bent
The Scottish foe has fired his tent."
And sudden, as he spoke,
From the sharp ridges of the hill,
All downward to the banks of Till,
Was wreathed in sable smoke.
Volumed and fast, and rolling far,
The cloud enveloped Scotland's war,
As down the hill they broke;
Nor martial shout, nor minstrel tone,
Announced their march; their tread alone,
At times one warning trumpet blown,
At times a stifled hum,
Told England, from his mountain-throne
King James did rushing come.—

Scarce could they hear, or see their foes,
Until at weapon-point they close.—
They close, in clouds of smoke and dust,
With sword-sway, and with lance's thrust;
And such a yell was there,
Of sudden and portentous birth,
As if men fought upon the earth,
And fiends in upper air;
Oh! life and death were in the shout,
Recoil and rally, charge and rout,
And triumph and despair.
Long look'd the anxious squires; their eye
Could in the darkness nought descry.

XXVI

At length the freshening western blast
Aside the shroud of battle cast;
And, first, the ridge of mingled spears
Above the brightening cloud appears;
And in the smoke the pennons flew,
As in the storm the white sea-mew.
Then mark'd they, dashing broad and far,
The broken billows of the war,
And plumed crests of chieftains brave,
Floating like foam upon the wave;
But nought distinct they see:
Wide raged the battle on the plain;
Spears shook, and falchions flash'd amain;
Fell England's arrow-flight like rain;
Crests rose, and stoop'd, and rose again,
Wild and disorderly.
Amid the scene of tumult, high
They saw Lord Marmion's falcon fly:
And stainless Tunstall's banner white,
And Edmund Howard's lion bright,
Still bear them bravely in the fight:
Although against them come,
Of gallant Gordons many a one,
And many a stubborn Badenoch-man,
And many a rugged Border clan,
With Huntly, and with Home.

XXVII

Far on the left, unseen the while,
Stanley broke Lennox and Argyle;
Though there the western mountaineer
Rush'd with bare bosom on the spear,
And flung the feeble targe aside,
And with both hands the broadsword plied.
'Twas vain:—But Fortune, on the right,
With fickle smile, cheer'd Scotland's fight.
Then fell that spotless banner white,
The Howard's lion fell;
Yet still Lord Marmion's falcon flew
With wavering flight, while fiercer grew
Around the battle-yell.
The Border slogan rent the sky!
A Home! a Gordon! was the cry:
Loud were the clanging blows;
Advanced,—forced back,—now low, now high,
The pennon sunk and rose;
As bends the bark's mast in the gale,
When rent are rigging, shrouds, and sail,
It waver'd 'mid the foes.
No longer Blount the view could bear:
"By Heaven and all its saints! I swear
I will not see it lost!
Fitz-Eustace, you with Lady Clare
May bid your beads, and patter prayer,—
I gallop to the host."
And to the fray he rode amain,
Follow'd by all the archer train.
The fiery youth, with desperate charge,
Made, for a space, an opening large,—
The rescued banner rose,—
But darkly closed the war around,
Like pine-tree, rooted from the ground,
It sank among the foes.
Then Eustace mounted too:—yet staid,
As loath to leave the helpless maid,
When, fast as shaft can fly,
Blood-shot his eyes, his nostrils spread,
The loose rein dangling from his head,

Housing and saddle bloody red,
Lord Marmion's steed rush'd by;
And Eustace, maddening at the sight,
A look and sign to Clara cast,
To mark he would return in haste,
Then plunged into the fight.

XXVIII

Ask me not what the maiden feels,
Left in that dreadful hour alone:
Perchance her reason stoops, or reels;
Perchance a courage, not her own,
Braces her mind to desperate tone.—
The scatter'd van of England wheels;—
She only said, as loud in air
The tumult roar'd, "Is Wilton there?"—
They fly, or, madden'd by despair,
Fight but to die,—"Is Wilton there?"
With that, straight up the hill there rode
Two horsemen drench'd with gore,
And in their arms, a helpless load,
A wounded knight they bore.
His hand still strain'd the broken brand;
His arms were smear'd with blood and sand:
Dragg'd from among the horses' feet,
With dinted shield, and helmet beat,
The falcon-crest and plumage gone,
Can that be haughty Marmion! . . .
Young Blount his armour did unlace,
And, gazing on his ghastly face,
Said—"By Saint George, he's gone!
That spear-wound has our master sped,
And see the deep cut on his head!
Good-night to Marmion."—
"Unnurtured Blount! thy brawling cease:
He opes his eyes," said Eustace; "peace!"

XXIX

When, doff'd his casque, he felt free air,
Around 'gan Marmion wildly stare:—
"Where's Harry Blount? Fitz-Eustace where?
Linger ye here, ye hearts of hare!

Redeem my pennon,—charge again!
Cry—'Marmion to the rescue!'—Vain!
Last of my race, on battle-plain
That shout shall ne'er be heard again!—
Yet my last thought is England's—fly,
To Dacre bear my signet-ring:
Tell him his squadrons up to bring.—
Fitz-Eustace, to Lord Surrey hie;
Tunstall lies dead upon the field,
His life-blood stains the spotless shield:
Edmund is down;—my life is reft;
The Admiral alone is left.
Let Stanley charge with spur of fire,—
With Chester charge, and Lancashire,
Full upon Scotland's central host,
Or victory and England's lost.—
Must I bid twice?—hence, varlets! fly!
Leave Marmion here alone—to die."
They parted, and alone he lay;
Clare drew her from the sight away,
Till pain wrung forth a lowly moan,
And half he murmur'd,—"Is there none,
Of all my halls have nurst,
Page, squire, or groom, one cup to bring
Of blessed water from the spring,
To slake my dying thirst!"

XXX

O, Woman! in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade
By the light quivering aspen made;
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou!—
Scarce were the piteous accents said,
When, with the Baron's casque, the maid
To the nigh streamlet ran:
Forgot were hatred, wrongs, and fears;
The plaintive voice alone she hears,
Sees but the dying man.
She stoop'd her by the runnel's side,
But in abhorrence backward drew;

For, oozing from the mountain's side,
Where raged the war, a dark-red tide
Was curdling in the streamlet blue.
Where shall she turn?—behold her mark
A little fountain cell,
Where water, clear as diamond-spark,
In a stone basin fell.
Above, some half-worn letters say,
Drink . weary . pilgrim . drink . and . pray .*
For . the . kind . soul . of . Sybil . Grey .
Who . built . this . cross . and . well .
She fill'd the helm, and back she hied,
And with surprise and joy espied
A Monk supporting Marmion's head—
A pious man, whom duty brought
To dubious verge of battle fought,
To shrieve the dying, bless the dead.

XXXI

Deep drank Lord Marmion of the wave,
And, as she stoop'd his brow to lave—
"Is it the hand of Clare," he said,
"Or injured Constance, bathes my head?"
Then, as remembrance rose,—
"Speak not to me of shrift or prayer!
I must redress her woes.
Short space, few words, are mine to spare;
Forgive and listen, gentle Clare!"
"Alas!" she said, "the while,—
O, think of your immortal weal!
In vain for Constance is your zeal;
She——died at Holy Isle."—
Lord Marmion started from the ground,
As light as if he felt no wound;
Though in the action burst the tide,
In torrents, from his wounded side.
"Then it was truth,"—he said,—"I knew
That the dark presage must be true.—
I would the Fiend, to whom belongs
The vengeance due to all her wrongs,
Would spare me but a day!

For wasting fire, and dying groan,
And priests slain on the altar stone,
Might bribe him for delay.
It may not be!—this dizzy trance—
Curse on yon base marauder's lance,
And doubly cursed my failing brand!
A sinful heart makes feeble hand."
Then, fainting, down on earth he sunk,
Supported by the trembling Monk.

XXXII

With fruitless labour, Clara bound,
And strove to stanch the gushing wound:
The Monk, with unavailing cares,
Exhausted all the Church's prayers.
Ever, he said, that, close and near,
A lady's voice was in his ear,
And that the priest he could not hear;
For that she ever sung,
"*In the lost battle, borne down by the flying,*
*Where mingles war's rattle with groans of the dying!*"
So the notes rung;—
"Avoid thee, Fiend!—with cruel hand,
Shake not the dying sinner's sand!—
O, look, my son, upon yon sign
Of the Redeemer's grace divine;
O, think on faith and bliss!—
By many a death-bed I have been,
And many a sinner's parting seen,
But never aught like this."—
The war, that for a space did fail,
Now trebly thundering swell'd the gale,
And—STANLEY! was the cry;—
A light on Marmion's visage spread,
And fired his glazing eye:
With dying hand, above his head,
He shook the fragment of his blade,
And shouted "Victory!—
Charge, Chester, charge! On, Stanley, on!"
Were the last words of Marmion.

XXXIII

By this, though deep the evening fell,
Still rose the battle's deadly swell,
For still the Scots, around their King,
Unbroken, fought in desperate ring.
Where's now their victor vaward wing,
Where Huntly, and where Home?—*
O, for a blast of that dread horn,
On Fontarabian echoes borne,
That to King Charles did come,
When Rowland brave, and Olivier,
And every paladin and peer,
On Roncesvalles died!
Such blast might warn them, not in vain,
To quit the plunder of the slain,
And turn the doubtful day again,
While yet on Flodden side,
Afar, the Royal Standard flies,
And round it toils, and bleeds, and dies,
Our Caledonian pride!
In vain the wish—for far away,
While spoil and havoc mark their way,
Near Sybil's Cross the plunderers stray.—
"O Lady," cried the Monk, "away!"
And placed her on her steed,
And led her to the chapel fair,
Of Tilmouth upon Tweed.
There all the night they spent in prayer,
And at the dawn of morning, there
She met her kinsman, Lord Fitz-Clare.

XXXIV

But as they left the dark'ning heath,
More desperate grew the strife of death.
The English shafts in volleys hail'd,
In headlong charge their horse assail'd;
Front, flank, and rear, the squadrons sweep
To break the Scottish circle deep,
That fought around their King.
But yet, though thick the shafts as snow,
Though charging knights like whirlwinds go,
Though bill-men ply the ghastly blow,

Unbroken was the ring;
The stubborn spear-men still made good
Their dark impenetrable wood,
Each stepping where his comrade stood,
The instant that he fell.
No thought was there of dastard flight:
Link'd in the serried phalanx tight,
Groom fought like noble, squire like knight,
As fearlessly and well;
Till utter darkness closed her wing
O'er their thin host and wounded King.
Then skilful Surrey's sage commands
Led back from strife his shatter'd bands;
And from the charge they drew,
As mountain-waves, from wasted lands,
Sweep back to ocean blue.
Then did their loss his foemen know;
Their King, their Lords, their mightiest low,
They melted from the field, as snow,
When streams are swoln and south winds blow,
Dissolves in silent dew.
Tweed's echoes heard the ceaseless plash,
While many a broken band,
Disorder'd, through her currents dash,
To gain the Scottish land;
To town and tower, to down and dale,
To tell red Flodden's dismal tale,
And raise the universal wail.
Tradition, legend, tune, and song,
Shall many an age that wail prolong:
Still from the sire the son shall hear
Of the stern strife, and carnage drear,
Of Flodden's fatal field,
Where shiver'd was fair Scotland's spear,
And broken was her shield!

XXXV

Day dawns upon the mountain's side:—
There, Scotland! lay thy bravest pride,
Chiefs, knights, and nobles, many a one:
The sad survivors all are gone.—
View not that corpse mistrustfully,

Defaced and mangled though it be ;
Nor to yon Border castle high,
Look northward with upbraiding eye ;
Nor cherish hope in vain,
That, journeying far on foreign strand,
The Royal Pilgrim to his land
May yet return again.
He saw the wreck his rashness wrought ;
Reckless of life, he desperate fought,
And fell on Flodden plain :
And well in death his trusty brand,*
Firm clench'd within his manly hand,
Beseem'd the Monarch slain.
But, O ! how changed since yon blithe night !—
Gladly I turn me from the sight,
Unto my tale again.

XXXVI

Short is my tale :—Fitz-Eustace' care
A pierced and mangled body bare
To moated Lichfield's lofty pile ;
And there, beneath the southern aisle,
A tomb, with Gothic sculpture fair,
Did long Lord Marmion's image bear
(Now vainly for its sight you look ;
'Twas levell'd when fanatic Brook
The fair cathedral storm'd and took ;
But, thanks to Heaven and good Saint Chad !
A guerdon meet the spoiler had !).
There erst was martial Marmion found,
His feet upon a couchant hound,
His hands to heaven upraised ;
And all around, on scutcheon rich,
And tablet carved, and fretted niche,
His arms and feats were blazed.
And yet, though all was carved so fair,
And priest for Marmion breathed the prayer,
The last Lord Marmion lay not there.
From Ettrick woods, a peasant swain
Follow'd his lord to Flodden plain,—
One of those flowers whom plaintive lay
In Scotland mourns as "wede away" : *

Sore wounded, Sybil's Cross he spied,
And dragg'd him to its foot, and died,
Close by the noble Marmion's side.
The spoilers stripp'd and gash'd the slain,
And thus their corpses were mista'en;
And thus, in the proud Baron's tomb,
The lowly woodsman took the room.

XXXVII

Less easy task it were, to show
Lord Marmion's nameless grave, and low.
They dug his grave e'en where he lay,
But every mark is gone;
Time's wasting hand has done away
The simple Cross of Sybil Grey,
And broke her font of stone:
But yet out from the little hill
Oozes the slender springlet still.
Oft halts the stranger there,
For thence may best his curious eye
The memorable field descry;
And shepherd boys repair
To seek the water-flag and rush,
And rest them by the hazel bush,
And plait their garlands fair;
Nor dream they sit upon the grave
That holds the bones of Marmion brave.—
When thou shalt find the little hill,
With thy heart commune, and be still.
If ever, in temptation strong,
Thou left'st the right path for the wrong;
If every devious step, thus trod,
Still led thee further from the road;
Dread thou to speak presumptuous doom
On noble Marmion's lowly tomb;
But say, "He died a gallant knight,
With sword in hand, for England's right."

XXXVIII

I do not rhyme to that dull elf,
Who cannot image to himself,

That all through Flodden's dismal night,
Wilton was foremost in the fight;
That, when brave Surrey's steed was slain,
'Twas Wilton mounted him again;
'Twas Wilton's brand that deepest hew'd,
Amid the spearmen's stubborn wood:
Unnamed by Hollinshed or Hall,
He was the living soul of all;
That, after fight, his faith made plain,
He won his rank and lands again;
And charged his old paternal shield
With bearings won on Flodden Field.
Nor sing I to that simple maid,
To whom it must in terms be said,
That King and kinsmen did agree
To bless fair Clara's constancy;
Who cannot, unless I relate,
Paint to her mind the bridal's state;
That Wolsey's voice the blessing spoke,
More, Sands, and Denny, pass'd the joke:
That bluff King Hal the curtain drew,
And Catharine's hand the stocking threw;
And afterwards, for many a day,
That it was held enough to say,
In blessing to a wedded pair,
"Love they like Wilton and like Clare!"

## L'Envoy

### TO THE READER

WHY then a final note prolong,
Or lengthen out a closing song,
Unless to bid the gentles speed,
Who long have listed to my rede?
To Statesmen grave, if such may deign
To read the Minstrel's idle strain,
Sound head, clean hand, and piercing wit,
And patriotic heart—as PITT!
A garland for the hero's crest,
And twined by her he loves the best;
To every lovely lady bright,
What can I wish but faithful knight?
To every faithful lover too,
What can I wish but lady true?
And knowledge to the studious sage;
And pillow to the head of age.
To thee, dear school-boy, whom my lay
Has cheated of thy hour of play,
Light task, and merry holiday!
To all, to each, a fair good-night,
And pleasing dreams, and slumbers light!

# THE

# BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN*

OR,

## THE VALE OF ST. JOHN

A LOVER'S TALE

1813

## INTRODUCTION

I

Come, Lucy! while 'tis morning hour,
  The woodland brook we needs must pass;
So, ere the sun assume his power,
We shelter in our poplar bower,
Where dew lies long upon the flower,
  Though vanish'd from the velvet grass.
Curbing the stream, this stony ridge
May serve us for a silvan bridge;
  For here, compell'd to disunite,
    Round petty isles the runnels glide,
And chafing off their puny spite,
The shallow murmurers waste their might,
  Yielding to footstep free and light
    A dry-shod pass from side to side.

II

Nay, why this hesitating pause?
And, Lucy, as thy step withdraws,
Why sidelong eye the streamlet's brim?
Titania's foot without a slip,
Like thine, though timid, light, and slim,
From stone to stone might safely trip,
Nor risk the glow-worm clasp to dip
That binds her slipper's silken rim.
Or trust thy lover's strength: nor fear
That this same stalwart arm of mine,
Which could yon oak's prone trunk uprear,
Shall shrink beneath the burden dear
Of form so slender, light, and fine.—
So,—now, the danger dared at last,
Look back, and smile at perils past!

III

And now we reach the favourite glade,
Paled in by copsewood, cliff, and stone,
Where never harsher sounds invade,
To break affection's whispering tone,
Than the deep breeze that waves the shade,
Than the small brooklet's feeble moan.
Come! rest thee on thy wonted seat;
Moss'd is the stone, the turf is green,
A place where lovers best may meet,
Who would that not their love be seen.
The boughs, that dim the summer sky,
Shall hide us from each lurking spy,
That fain would spread the invidious tale,
How Lucy of the lofty eye,
Noble in birth, in fortunes high,
She for whom lords and barons sigh,
Meets her poor Arthur in the dale.

IV

How deep that blush!—how deep that sigh!
And why does Lucy shun mine eye?
Is it because that crimson draws
Its colour from some secret cause,

Some hidden movement of the breast,
She would not that her Arthur guess'd?
O! quicker far is lovers' ken
Than the dull glance of common men,
And, by strange sympathy, can spell
The thoughts the loved one will not tell!
And mine, in Lucy's blush, saw met
The hues of pleasure and regret;
Pride mingled in the sigh her voice,
And shared with Love the crimson glow;
Well pleased that thou art Arthur's choice,
Yet shamed thine own is placed so low:
Thou turn'st thy self-confessing cheek,
As if to meet the breeze's cooling;
Then, Lucy, hear thy tutor speak,
For Love, too, has his hours of schooling.

V

Too oft my anxious eye has spied
That secret grief thou fain wouldst hide,
The passing pang of humbled pride;
Too oft, when through the splendid hall,
The load-star of each heart and eye,
My fair one leads the glittering ball,
Will her stol'n glance on Arthur fall,
With such a blush and such a sigh!
Thou wouldst not yield, for wealth or rank,
The heart thy worth and beauty won,
Nor leave me on this mossy bank,
To meet a rival on a throne:
Why, then, should vain repinings rise,
That to thy lover fate denies
A nobler name, a wide domain,
A Baron's birth, a menial train,
Since Heaven assign'd him, for his part,
A lyre, a falchion, and a heart?

VI

My sword——its master must be dumb;
But, when a soldier names my name,
Approach, my Lucy! fearless come,

Nor dread to hear of Arthur's shame.
My heart—'mid all yon courtly crew,
Of lordly rank and lofty line,
Is there to love and honour true,
That boasts a pulse so warm as mine?
They praised thy diamonds' lustre rare—
Match'd with thine eyes, I thought it faded;
They praised the pearls that bound thy hair—
I only saw the locks they braided;
They talk'd of wealthy dower and land,
And titles of high birth the token—
I thought of Lucy's heart and hand,
Nor knew the sense of what was spoken.
And yet, if rank'd in Fortune's roll,
I might have learn'd their choice unwise,
Who rate the dower above the soul,
And Lucy's diamonds o'er her eyes.

VII

My lyre—it is an idle toy,
That borrows accents not its own,
Like warbler of Colombian sky,
That sings but in a mimic tone.
Ne'er did it sound o'er sainted well,
Nor boasts it aught of Border spell;
Its strings no feudal slogan pour,
Its heroes draw no broad claymore;
No shouting clans applauses raise,
Because it sung their fathers' praise;
On Scottish moor, or English down,
It ne'er was graced with fair renown;
Nor won,—best meed to minstrel true,—
One favouring smile from fair Buccleuch!
By one poor streamlet sounds its tone,
And heard by one dear maid alone.

VIII

But, if thou bid'st, these tones shall tell
Of errant knight, and damozelle;
Of the dread knot a Wizard tied,
In punishment of maiden's pride,

In notes of marvel and of fear,
That best may charm romantic ear.
For Lucy loves,—like COLLINS, ill-starr'd name,
Whose lay's requital, was that tardy fame,
Who bound no laurel round his living head,
Should hang it o'er his monument when dead,—
For Lucy loves to tread enchanted strand,
And thread, like him, the maze of Fairy land;
Of golden battlements to view the gleam,
And slumber soft by some Elysian stream;
Such lays she loves,—and, such my Lucy's choice,
What other song can claim her Poet's voice?

## CANTO FIRST

I

WHERE is the Maiden of mortal strain,
That may match with the Baron of Triermain?
She must be lovely, and constant, and kind,
Holy and pure, and humble of mind,
Blithe of cheer, and gentle of mood,
Courteous, and generous, and noble of blood—
Lovely as the sun's first ray,
When it breaks the clouds of an April day;
Constant and true as the widow'd dove,
Kind as a minstrel that sings of love;
Pure as the fountain in rocky cave,
Where never sunbeam kiss'd the wave;
Humble as maiden that loves in vain,
Holy as hermit's vesper strain;
Gentle as breeze that but whispers and dies,
Yet blithe as the light leaves that dance in its sighs;
Courteous as monarch the morn he is crown'd,
Generous as spring-dews that bless the glad ground;
Noble her blood as the currents that met
In the veins of the noblest Plantagenet—
Such must her form be, her mood, and her strain,
That shall match with Sir Roland of Triermain.

II

Sir Roland de Vaux he hath laid him to sleep,
His blood it was fever'd, his breathing was deep.
He had been pricking against the Scot,
The foray was long, and the skirmish hot;

His dinted helm and his buckler's plight
Bore token of a stubborn fight.
All in the castle must hold them still,
Harpers must lull him to his rest,
With the slow soft tunes he loves the best,
Till sleep sink down upon his breast,
Like the dew on a summer hill.

III

It was the dawn of an autumn day;
The sun was struggling with frost-fog grey,
That like a silvery crape was spread
Round Skiddaw's dim and distant head,
And faintly gleam'd each painted pane
Of the lordly halls of Triermain,
When that Baron bold awoke.
Starting he woke, and loudly did call,
Rousing his menials in bower and hall,
While hastily he spoke.

IV

"Hearken, my minstrels! Which of ye all
Touch'd his harp with that dying fall,
So sweet, so soft, so faint,
It seem'd an angel's whisper'd call
To an expiring saint?
And hearken, my merry-men! What time or where
Did she pass, that maid with her heavenly brow,
With her look so sweet and her eyes so fair,
And her graceful step and her angel air,
And the eagle plume in her dark-brown hair,
That pass'd from my bower e'en now?"

V

Answer'd him Richard de Bretville; he
Was chief of the Baron's minstrelsy,—
"Silent, noble chieftain, we
Have sat since midnight close,
When such lulling sounds as the brooklet sings,
Murmur'd from our melting strings,
And hush'd you to repose.

Had a harp-note sounded here,
It had caught my watchful ear,
Although it fell as faint and shy
As bashful maiden's half-form'd sigh,
When she thinks her lover near."—
Answer'd Philip of Fasthwaite tall,
He kept guard in the outer-hall,—
"Since at eve our watch took post,
Not a foot has thy portal cross'd;
Else had I heard the steps, though low
And light they fell, as when earth receives,
In morn of frost, the wither'd leaves,
That drop when no winds blow."—

VI

"Then come thou hither, Henry, my page,
Whom I saved from the sack of Hermitage,
When that dark castle, tower, and spire,
Rose to the skies a pile of fire,
And redden'd all the Nine-stane Hill,
And the shrieks of death, that wildly broke
Through devouring flame and smothering smoke,
Made the warrior's heart-blood chill.
The trustiest thou of all my train,
My fleetest courser thou must rein,
And ride to Lyulph's tower,
And from the Baron of Triermain
Greet well that Sage of power.
He is sprung from Druid sires,
And British bards that tuned their lyres
To Arthur's and Pendragon's praise,
And his who sleeps at Dunmailraise.
Gifted like his gifted race,
He the characters can trace,
Graven deep in elder time
Upon Hellvellyn's cliffs sublime;
Sign and sigil well doth he know,
And can bode of weal and woe,
Of kingdoms' fall and fate of wars,
From mystic dreams and course of stars.
He shall tell if middle earth
To that enchanting shape gave birth,

Or if 'twas but an airy thing,
Such as fantastic slumbers bring,
Framed from the rainbow's varying dyes,
Or fading tints of western skies.
For, by the Blessed Rood I swear,
If that fair form breathe vital air,
No other maiden by my side
Shall ever rest De Vaux's bride!"

VII

The faithful Page he mounts his steed,
And soon he cross'd green Irthing's mead,
Dash'd o'er Kirkoswald's verdant plain,
And Eden barr'd his course in vain.
He pass'd red Penrith's Table Round,
For feats of chivalry renown'd,
Left Mayburgh's mound and stones of power,
By Druids raised in magic hour,
And traced the Eamont's winding way,
Till Ulfo's lake beneath him lay.

VIII

Onward he rode, the pathway still
Winding betwixt the lake and hill;
Till, on the fragment of a rock,
Struck from its base by lightning shock,
He saw the hoary Sage:
The silver moss and lichen twined,
With fern and deer-hair check'd and lined,
A cushion fit for age;
And o'er him shook the aspin-tree,
A restless rustling canopy.
Then sprung young Henry from his selle,
And greeted Lyulph grave,
And then his master's tale did tell,
And then for counsel crave.
The Man of Years mused long and deep,
Of time's lost treasures taking keep,
And then, as rousing from a sleep,
His solemn answer gave.

IX

"That maid is born of middle earth,
And may of man be won,
Though there have glided since her birth
Five hundred years and one.
But where's the Knight in all the north,
That dare the adventure follow forth,
So perilous to knightly worth,
In the valley of St. John?
Listen, youth, to what I tell,
And bind it on thy memory well;
Nor muse that I commence the rhyme
Far distant 'mid the wrecks of time.
The mystic tale, by bard and sage,
Is handed down from Merlin's age.

X

Lyulph's Tale

"King Arthur has ridden from merry Carlisle,
When Pentecost was o'er:
He journey'd like errant-knight the while,
And sweetly the summer sun did smile
On mountain, moss, and moor.
Above his solitary track
Rose Glaramara's ridgy back,
Amid whose yawning gulfs the sun
Cast umber'd radiance red and dun,
Though never sunbeam could discern
The surface of that sable tarn,
In whose black mirror you may spy
The stars, while noontide lights the sky.
The gallant King he skirted still
The margin of that mighty hill;
Rock upon rocks incumbent hung,
And torrents, down the gullies flung,
Join'd the rude river that brawl'd on,
Recoiling now from crag and stone,
Now diving deep from human ken,
And raving down its darksome glen.
The Monarch judged this desert wild,
With such romantic ruin piled,

Was theatre by Nature's hand
For feat of high achievement plann'd.

XI

"O rather he chose, that Monarch bold,
On vent'rous quest to ride,
In plate and mail, by wood and wold,
Than, with ermine trapp'd and cloth of gold,
In princely bower to bide;
The bursting crash of a foeman's spear
As it shiver'd against his mail,
Was merrier music to his ear
Than courtier's whisper'd tale:
And the clash of Caliburn more dear,
When on the hostile casque it rung,
Than all the lays
To their monarch's praise,
That the harpers of Reged sung.
He loved better to rest by wood or river,
Than in bower of his bride, Dame Guenever,
For he left that lady, so lovely of cheer,
To follow adventures of danger and fear;
And the frank-hearted Monarch full little did wot,
That she smiled, in his absence, on brave Lancelot.

XII

"He rode, till over down and dell
The shade more broad and deeper fell;
And though around the mountain's head
Flow'd streams of purple, and gold, and red,
Dark at the base, unblest by beam,
Frown'd the black rocks, and roar'd the stream.
With toil the King his way pursued
By lonely Threlkeld's waste and wood,
Till on his course obliquely shone
The narrow valley of Saint John,
Down sloping to the western sky,
Where lingering sunbeams love to lie.
Right glad to feel those beams again,
The King drew up his charger's rein;
With gauntlet raised he screen'd his sight,
As dazzled with the level light,

And, from beneath his glove of mail,
Scann'd at his ease the lovely vale,
While 'gainst the sun his armour bright
Gleam'd ruddy like the beacon's light.

XIII

"Paled in by many a lofty hill,
The narrow dale lay smooth and still,
And, down its verdant bosom led,
A winding brooklet found its bed.
But, midmost of the vale, a mound
Arose with airy turrets crown'd,
Buttress, and rampire's circling bound,
And mighty keep and tower;
Seem'd some primeval giant's hand
The castle's massive walls had plann'd,
A ponderous bulwark to withstand
Ambitious Nimrod's power.
Above the moated entrance slung,
The balanced drawbridge trembling hung,
As jealous of a foe;
Wicket of oak, as iron hard,
With iron studded, clench'd, and barr'd,
And prong'd portcullis, join'd to guard
The gloomy pass below.
But the grey walls no banners crown'd,
Upon the watch-tower's airy round
No warder stood his horn to sound,
No guard beside the bridge was found,
And, where the Gothic gateway frown'd,
Glanced neither bill nor bow.

XIV

"Beneath the castle's gloomy pride,
In ample round did Arthur ride
Three times; nor living thing he spied,
Nor heard a living sound,
Save that, awakening from her dream,
The owlet now began to scream,
In concert with the rushing stream,
That wash'd the battled mound.
He lighted from his goodly steed,

And he left him to graze on bank and mead ;
And slowly he climb'd the narrow way,
That reached the entrance grim and grey,
And he stood the outward arch below,
And his bugle-horn prepared to blow,
In summons blithe and bold,
Deeming to rouse from iron sleep
The guardian of this dismal Keep,
Which well he guess'd the hold
Of wizard stern, or goblin grim,
Or pagan of gigantic limb,
The tyrant of the wold.

XV

"The ivory bugle's golden tip
Twice touched the Monarch's manly lip,
And twice his hand withdrew.
—Think not but Arthur's heart was good !
His shield was cross'd by the blessed Rood,
Had a pagan host before him stood,
He had charged them through and through ;
Yet the silence of that ancient place
Sunk on his heart, and he paused a space
Ere yet his horn he blew.
But, instant as its 'larum rung,
The castle gate was open flung,
Portcullis rose with crashing groan
Full harshly up its groove of stone ;
The balance-beams obey'd the blast,
And down the trembling drawbridge cast ;
The vaulted arch before him lay,
With nought to bar the gloomy way,
And onward Arthur paced, with hand
On Caliburn's resistless brand.

XVI

"A hundred torches, flashing bright,
Dispell'd at once the gloomy night
That lour'd along the walls,
And show'd the King's astonish'd sight
The inmates of the halls.

Nor wizard stern, nor goblin grim,
Nor giant huge of form and limb,
Nor heathen knight, was there;
But the cressets, which odours flung aloft,
Show'd by their yellow light and soft,
A band of damsels fair.
Onward they came, like summer wave
That dances to the shore;
An hundred voices welcome gave,
And welcome o'er and o'er!
An hundred lovely hands assail
The bucklers of the monarch's mail,
And busy labour'd to unhasp
Rivet of steel and iron clasp.
One wrapp'd him in a mantle fair,
And one flung odours on his hair;
His short curl'd ringlets one smooth'd down,
One wreathed them with a myrtle crown.
A bride upon her wedding-day
Was tended ne'er by troop so gay.

XVII

"Loud laugh'd they all,—the King, in vain,
With questions task'd the giddy train;
Let him entreat, or crave, or call,
'Twas one reply,—loud laugh'd they all.
Then o'er him mimic chains they fling,
Framed of the fairest flowers of spring.
While some their gentle force unite,
Onward to drag the wondering knight,
Some, bolder, urge his pace with blows,
Dealt with the lily or the rose.
Behind him were in triumph borne
The warlike arms he late had worn.
Four of the train combined to rear
The terrors of Tintadgel's spear;
Two, laughing at their lack of strength,
Dragg'd Caliburn in cumbrous length;
One, while she aped a martial stride,
Placed on her brows the helmet's pride;
Then scream'd, 'twixt laughter and surprise,
To feel its depth o'erwhelm her eyes.

With revel-shout, and triumph-song,
Thus gaily march'd the giddy throng.

XVIII

"Through many a gallery and hall
They led, I ween, their royal thrall;
At length, beneath a fair arcade
Their march and song at once they staid.
The eldest maiden of the band
(The lovely maid was scarce eighteen),
Raised, with imposing air, her hand,
And reverent silence did command,
On entrance of their Queen,
And they were mute.—But as a glance
They steal on Arthur's countenance
Bewilder'd with surprise,
Their smother'd mirth again 'gan speak,
In archly dimpled chin and cheek,
And laughter-lighted eyes.

XIX

"The attributes of those high days
Now only live in minstrel-lays;
For Nature, now exhausted, still
Was then profuse of good and ill.
Strength was gigantic, valour high,
And wisdom soar'd beyond the sky,
And beauty had such matchless beam
As lights not now a lover's dream.
Yet e'en in that romantic age,
Ne'er were such charms by mortal seen,
As Arthur's dazzled eyes engage,
When forth on that enchanted stage,
With glittering train of maid and page,
Advanced the castle's Queen!
While up the hall she slowly pass'd,
Her dark eye on the King she cast,
That flash'd expression strong;
The longer dwelt that lingering look,
Her cheek the livelier colour took,
And scarce the shame-faced King could brook
The gaze that lasted long.

A sage, who had that look espied,
Where kindling passion strove with pride,
Had whisper'd, 'Prince, beware!
From the chafed tiger rend the prey,
Rush on the lion when at bay,
Bar the fell dragon's blighted way,
But shun that lovely snare!'

XX

"At once, that inward strife suppress'd,
The dame approach'd her warlike guest,
With greeting in that fair degree,
Where female pride and courtesy
Are blended with such passing art
As awes at once and charms the heart.
A courtly welcome first she gave,
Then of his goodness 'gan to crave
Construction fair and true
Of her light maidens' idle mirth,
Who drew from lonely glens their birth,
Nor knew to pay to stranger worth
And dignity their due;
And then she pray'd that he would rest
That night her castle's honour'd guest.
The monarch meetly thanks express'd;
The banquet rose at her behest,
With lay and tale, and laugh and jest,
Apace the evening flew.

XXI

"The Lady sate the Monarch by,
Now in her turn abash'd and shy,
And with indifference seem'd to hear
The toys he whisper'd in her ear.
Her bearing modest was and fair,
Yet shadows of constraint were there,
That show'd an over-cautious care
Some inward thought to hide;
Oft did she pause in full reply,
And oft cast down her large dark eye,
Oft check'd the soft voluptuous sigh,
That heaved her bosom's pride.

Slight symptoms these, but shepherds know
How hot the mid-day sun shall glow,
From the mist of morning sky;
And so the wily Monarch guess'd,
That this assumed restraint express'd
More ardent passions in the breast,
Than ventured to the eye.
Closer he press'd, while beakers rang,
While maidens laugh'd and minstrels sang,
Still closer to her ear—
But why pursue the common tale?
Or wherefore show how knights prevail
When ladies dare to hear?
Or wherefore trace, from what slight cause
Its source one tyrant passion draws,
Till, mastering all within,
Where lives the man that has not tried,
How mirth can into folly glide,
And folly into sin!"

## CANTO SECOND

### I

### Lyulph's Tale, continued

"ANOTHER day, another day,
And yet another, glides away!
The Saxon stern, the pagan Dane,
Maraud on Britain's shores again.
Arthur, of Christendom the flower,
Lies loitering in a lady's bower;
The horn that foemen wont to fear,
Sounds but to wake the Cumbrian deer,
And Caliburn, the British pride,
Hangs useless by a lover's side.

### II

"Another day, another day,
And yet another, glides away!

Heroic plans in pleasure drown'd,
He thinks not of the Table Round ;
In lawless love dissolved his life,
He thinks not of his beauteous wife :
Better he loves to snatch a flower
From bosom of his paramour,
Than from a Saxon knight to wrest
The honours of his heathen crest ;
Better to wreathe, 'mid tresses brown,
The heron's plume her hawk struck down,
Than o'er the altar give to flow
The banners of a Paynim foe.
Thus, week by week, and day by day,
His life inglorious glides away :
But she, that soothes his dream, with fear
Beholds his hour of waking near !

III

" Much force have mortal charms to stay
Our peace in Virtue's toilsome way ;
But Guendolen's might far outshine
Each maid of merely mortal line.
Her mother was of human birth,
Her sire a Genie of the earth,
In days of old deem'd to preside
O'er lovers' wiles and beauty's pride,
By youths and virgins worshipp'd long,
With festive dance and choral song,
Till, when the cross to Britain came,
On heathen altars died the flame.
Now, deep in Wastdale solitude,
The downfall of his rights he rued,
And, born of his resentment heir,
He train'd to guile that lady fair,
To sink in slothful sin and shame
The champions of the Christian name.
Well skill'd to keep vain thoughts alive,
And all to promise, nought to give,—
The timid youth had hope in store,
The bold and pressing gain'd no more.
As wilder'd children leave their home,

After the rainbow's arch to roam,
Her lovers barter'd fair esteem,
Faith, fame, and honour, for a dream.

IV

"Her sire's soft arts the soul to tame
She practised thus—till Arthur came;
Then, frail humanity had part,
And all the mother claim'd her heart.
Forgot each rule her father gave,
Sunk from a princess to a slave,
Too late must Guendolen deplore,
He, that has all, can hope no more!
Now must she see her lover strain,
At every turn, her feeble chain;
Watch, to new-bind each knot, and shrink
To view each fast-decaying link.
Art she invokes to Nature's aid,
Her vest to zone, her locks to braid;
Each varied pleasure heard her call,
The feast, the tourney, and the ball:
Her storied lore she next applies,
Taxing her mind to aid her eyes;
Now more than mortal wise, and then
In female softness sunk again;
Now, raptured, with each wish complying,
With feign'd reluctance now denying;
Each charm she varied, to retain
A varying heart—and all in vain!

V

"Thus in the garden's narrow bound,
Flank'd by some castle's Gothic round,
Fain would the artist's skill provide,
The limits of his realms to hide.
The walks in labyrinths he twines,
Shade after shade with skill combines,
With many a varied flowery knot,
And copse, and arbour, decks the spot,
Tempting the hasty foot to stay,
And linger on the lovely way——

Vain art! vain hope! 'tis fruitless all!
At length we reach the bounding wall,
And, sick of flower and trim-dress'd tree,
Long for rough glades and forest free.

VI

"Three summer months had scantly flown,
When Arthur, in embarrass'd tone,
Spoke of his liegemen and his throne;
Said, all too long had been his stay,
And duties, which a Monarch sway,
Duties, unknown to humbler men,
Must tear her knight from Guendolen.—
She listen'd silently the while,
Her mood express'd in bitter smile;
Beneath her eye must Arthur quail,
And oft resume the unfinish'd tale,
Confessing, by his downcast eye,
The wrong he sought to justify.
He ceased. A moment mute she gazed;
And then her looks to heaven she raised;
One palm her temples veiled, to hide
The tear that sprung in spite of pride;
The other for an instant press'd
The foldings of her silken vest.

VII

"At her reproachful sign and look,
The hint the Monarch's conscience took.
Eager he spoke—'No, lady, no!
Deem not of British Arthur so,
Nor think he can deserter prove
To the dear pledge of mutual love.
I swear by sceptre and by sword,
As belted knight and Britain's lord,
That if a boy shall claim my care,
That boy is born a kingdom's heir;
But, if a maiden Fate allows,
To choose that maid a fitting spouse,
A summer-day in lists shall strive
My knights,—the bravest knights alive,—

And he, the best and bravest tried,
Shall Arthur's daughter claim for bride.'—
He spoke, with voice resolved and high—
The lady deign'd him not reply.

VIII

"At dawn of morn, ere on the brake
His matins did a warbler make,
Or stirr'd his wing to brush away
A single dew-drop from the spray,
Ere yet a sunbeam, through the mist,
The castle-battlements had kiss'd,
The gates revolve, the drawbridge falls,
And Arthur sallies from the walls.
Doff'd his soft garb of Persia's loom,
And steel from spur to helmet-plume,
His Lybian steed full proudly trode,
And joyful neigh'd beneath his load.
The Monarch gave a passing sigh
To penitence and pleasures by,
When, lo! to his astonish'd ken
Appear'd the form of Guendolen.

IX

"Beyond the outmost wall she stood,
Attired like huntress of the wood:
Sandall'd her feet, her ankles bare,
And eagle-plumage deck'd her hair;
Firm was her look, her bearing bold,
And in her hand a cup of gold.
'Thou goest!' she said, 'and ne'er again
Must we two meet, in joy or pain.
Full fain would I this hour delay,
Though weak the wish—yet, wilt thou stay?
—No! thou look'st forward. Still attend,—
Part we like lover and like friend.'
She raised the cup—'Not this the juice,
The sluggish vines of earth produce;
Pledge we, at parting, in the draught
Which Genii love!'—she said, and quaff'd;
And strange unwonted lustres fly
From her flush'd cheek and sparkling eye.

X

"The courteous Monarch bent him low,
And, stooping down from saddlebow,
Lifted the cup, in act to drink.
A drop escaped the goblet's brink—
Intense as liquid fire from hell,
Upon the charger's neck it fell.
Screaming with agony and fright,
He bolted twenty feet upright—
—The peasant still can show the dint,
Where his hoofs lighted on the flint.—
From Arthur's hand the goblet flew,
Scattering a shower of fiery dew,
That burn'd and blighted where it fell!
The frantic steed rush'd up the dell,
As whistles from the bow the reed;
Nor bit nor rein could check his speed,
Until he gain'd the hill;
Then breath and sinew fail'd apace,
And, reeling from the desperate race,
He stood, exhausted, still.
The Monarch, breathless and amazed,
Back on the fatal castle gazed——
Nor tower nor donjon could he spy,
Darkening against the morning sky;
But, on the spot where once they frown'd,
The lonely streamlet brawl'd around
A tufted knoll, where dimly shone
Fragments of rock and rifted stone.
Musing on this strange hap the while,
The King wends back to fair Carlisle;
And cares, that cumber royal sway,
Wore memory of the past away.

XI

"Full fifteen years, and more, were sped,
Each brought new wreaths to Arthur's head.
Twelve bloody fields, with glory fought,
The Saxons to subjection brought:
Rython, the mighty giant, slain
By his good brand, relieved Bretagne:
The Pictish Gillamore in fight,

And Roman Lucius, own'd his might;
And wide were through the world renown'd
The glories of his Table Round.
Each knight, who sought adventurous fame,
To the bold court of Britain came,
And all who suffer'd causeless wrong,
From tyrant proud, or faitour strong,
Sought Arthur's presence to complain,
Nor there for aid implored in vain.

XII

"For this the King, with pomp and pride,
Held solemn court at Whitsuntide,
And summon'd Prince and Peer,
All who owed homage for their land,
Or who craved knighthood from his hand,
Or who had succour to demand,
To come from far and near.
At such high tide, were glee and game
Mingled with feats of martial fame,
For many a stranger champion came,
In lists to break a spear;
And not a knight of Arthur's host,
Save that he trode some foreign coast,
But at this feast of Pentecost
Before him must appear.
Ah, Minstrels! when the Table Round
Arose, with all its warriors crown'd,
There was a theme for bards to sound
In triumph to their string!
Five hundred years are past and gone,
But Time shall draw his dying groan,
Ere he behold the British throne
Begirt with such a ring!

XIII

"The heralds named the appointed spot,
As Caerleon or Camelot,
Or Carlisle fair and free.
At Penrith, now, the feast was set,
And in fair Eamont's vale were met
The flower of Chivalry.

There Galaad sate with manly grace,
Yet maiden meekness in his face;
There Morolt of the iron mace,
And love-lorn Tristrem there:
And Dinadam with lively glance,
And Lanval with the fairy lance,
And Mordred with his look askance,
Brunor and Bevidere.
Why should I tell of numbers more?
Sir Cay, Sir Banier, and Sir Bore,
Sir Carodac the keen,
The gentle Gawain's courteous lore,
Hector de Mares and Pellinore,
And Lancelot, that ever more
Look'd stol'n-wise on the Queen.

XIV

"When wine and mirth did most abound,
And harpers play'd their blithest round,
A shrilly trumpet shook the ground,
And marshals clear'd the ring;
A maiden, on a palfrey white,
Heading a band of damsels bright,
Paced through the circle, to alight
And kneel before the King.
Arthur, with strong emotion, saw
Her graceful boldness check'd by awe,
Her dress, like huntress of the wold,
Her bow and baldric trapp'd with gold,
Her sandall'd feet, her ankles bare,
And the eagle-plume that deck'd her hair.
Graceful her veil she backward flung——
The King, as from his seat he sprung,
Almost cried, 'Guendolen!'
But 'twas a face more frank and wild,
Betwixt the woman and the child,
Where less of magic beauty smiled
Than of the race of men;
And in the forehead's haughty grace,
The lines of Britain's royal race,
Pendragon's, you might ken.

XV

"Faltering, yet gracefully, she said—
'Great Prince! behold an orphan maid,
In her departed mother's name,
A father's vow'd protection claim!
The vow was sworn in desert lone,
In the deep valley of St. John.'
At once the King the suppliant raised,
And kiss'd her brow, her beauty praised;
His vow, he said, should well be kept,
Ere in the sea the sun was dipp'd,—
Then, conscious, glanced upon his queen:
But she, unruffled at the scene
Of human frailty, construed mild,
Look'd upon Lancelot and smiled.

XVI

"'Up! up! each knight of gallant crest
Take buckler, spear, and brand!
He that to-day shall bear him best,
Shall win my Gyneth's hand.
And Arthur's daughter, when a bride,
Shall bring a noble dower;
Both fair Strath-Clyde and Reged wide,
And Carlisle town and tower.'
Then might you hear each valiant knight,
To page and squire that cried,
'Bring my armour bright, and my courser wight!
'Tis not each day that a warrior's might
May win a royal bride.'
Then cloaks and caps of maintenance
In haste aside they fling;
The helmets glance, and gleams the lance,
And the steel-weaved hauberks ring.
Small care had they of their peaceful array,
They might gather it that wolde;
For brake and bramble glitter'd gay,
With pearls and cloth of gold.

XVII

"Within trumpet sound of the Table Round,
Were fifty champions free,

And they all arise to fight that prize,—
They all arise, but three.
Nor love's fond troth, nor wedlock's oath,
One gallant could withhold,
For priests will allow of a broken vow,
For penance or for gold.
But sigh and glance from ladies bright
Among the troop were thrown,
To plead their right, and true-love plight,
And 'plain of honour flown.
The knights they busied them so fast,
With buckling spur and belt,
That sigh and look, by ladies cast,
Were neither seen nor felt.
From pleading, or upbraiding glance,
Each gallant turns aside,
And only thought, 'If speeds my lance,
A queen becomes my bride!
She has fair Strath-Clyde, and Reged wide,
And Carlisle tower and town;
She is the loveliest maid, beside,
That ever heir'd a crown.'
So in haste their coursers they bestride,
And strike their visors down.

XVIII

"The champions, arm'd in martial sort,
Have throng'd into the list,
And but three knights of Arthur's court
Are from the tourney miss'd.
And still these lovers' fame survives
For faith so constant shown,—
There were two who loved their neighbours' wives,
And one who loved his own.
The first was Lancelot de Lac,
The second Tristrem bold,
The third was valiant Carodac,
Who won the cup of gold,
What time, of all King Arthur's crew
(Thereof came jeer and laugh),
He, as the mate of lady true,
Alone the cup could quaff.

Though envy's tongue would fain surmise,
That, but for very shame,
Sir Carodac, to fight that prize,
Had given both cup and dame;
Yet, since but one of that fair court
Was true to wedlock's shrine,
Brand him who will with base report,—
He shall be free from mine.

XIX

"Now caracoled the steeds in air,
Now plumes and pennons wanton'd fair,
As all around the lists so wide
In panoply the champions ride.
King Arthur saw, with startled eye,
The flower of chivalry march by,
The bulwark of the Christian creed,
The kingdom's shield in hour of need.
Too late he thought him of the woe
Might from their civil conflict flow;
For well he knew they would not part
Till cold was many a gallant heart.
His hasty vow he 'gan to rue,
And Gyneth then apart he drew;
To her his leading-staff resign'd,
But added caution grave and kind.

XX

"'Thou see'st, my child, as promise-bound,
I bid the trump for tourney sound.
Take thou my warder, as the queen
And umpire of the martial scene;
But mark thou this:—as Beauty bright
Is polar star to valiant knight,
As at her word his sword he draws,
His fairest guerdon her applause,
So gentle maid should never ask
Of knighthood vain and dangerous task;
And Beauty's eyes should ever be
Like the twin stars that soothe the sea,
And Beauty's breath shall whisper peace,
And bid the storm of battle cease.

I tell thee this, lest all too far
These knights urge tourney into war.
Blithe at the trumpet let them go,
And fairly counter blow for blow;—
No striplings these, who succour need
For a razed helm or falling steed.
But, Gyneth, when the strife grows warm,
And threatens death or deadly harm,
Thy sire entreats, thy king commands,
Thou drop the warder from thy hands.
Trust thou thy father with thy fate,
Doubt not he choose thee fitting mate;
Nor be it said, through Gyneth's pride,
A rose of Arthur's chaplet died.'

XXI

"A proud and discontented glow
O'ershadow'd Gyneth's brow of snow;
She put the warder by:—
'Reserve thy boon, my liege,' she said,
'Thus chaffer'd down and limited,
Debased and narrow'd, for a maid
Of less degree than I.
No petty chief, but holds his heir
At a more honour'd price and rare
Than Britain's King holds me!
Although the sunburn'd maid, for dower,
Has but her father's rugged tower,
His barren hill and lea.'—
King Arthur swore, 'By crown and sword,
As belted knight and Britain's lord,
That a whole summer's day should strive
His knights, the bravest knights alive!'—
'Recall thine oath! and to her glen
Poor Gyneth can return agen;
Not on thy daughter will the stain,
That soils thy sword and crown, remain.
But think not she will e'er be bride
Save to the bravest, proved and tried;
Pendragon's daughter will not fear
For clashing sword, or splinter'd spear,
Nor shrink though blood should flow;

And all too well sad Guendolen
Hath taught the faithlessness of men,
That child of hers should pity, when
Their meed they undergo.'—

XXII

"He frown'd and sigh'd, the Monarch bold:—
'I give—what I may not withhold;
For, not for danger, dread, or death,
Must British Arthur break his faith.
Too late I mark, thy mother's art
Hath taught thee this relentless part.
I blame her not, for she had wrong,
But not to these my faults belong.
Use, then, the warder as thou wilt;
But trust me, that, if life be spilt,
In Arthur's love, in Arthur's grace,
Gyneth shall lose a daughter's place.'
With that he turn'd his head aside,
Nor brook'd to gaze upon her pride,
As, with the truncheon raised, she sate
The arbitress of mortal fate;
Nor brook'd to mark, in ranks disposed,
How the bold champions stood opposed,
For shrill the trumpet-flourish fell
Upon his ear like passing bell!
Then first from sight of martial fray
Did Britain's hero turn away.

XXIII

"But Gyneth heard the clangour high,
As hears the hawk the partridge cry.
Oh, blame her not! the blood was hers,
That at the trumpet's summons stirs!—
And e'en the gentlest female eye
Might the brave strife of chivalry
A while untroubled view;
So well accomplish'd was each knight,
To strike and to defend in fight,
Their meeting was a goodly sight,
While plate and mail held true.
The lists with painted plumes were strown,

Upon the wind at random thrown,
But helm and breastplate bloodless shone,
It seem'd their feather'd crests alone
Should this encounter rue.
And ever, as the combat grows,
The trumpet's cheery voice arose,
Like lark's shrill song the flourish flows,
Heard while the gale of April blows
The merry greenwood through.

XXIV

"But soon to earnest grew their game,
The spears drew blood, the swords struck flame,
And, horse and man, to ground there came
Knights, who shall rise no more!
Gone was the pride the war that graced,
Gay shields were cleft, and crests defaced,
And steel coats riven, and helms unbraced,
And pennons stream'd with gore.
Gone, too, were fence and fair array,
And desperate strength made deadly way
At random through the bloody fray,
And blows were dealt with headlong sway,
Unheeding where they fell;
And now the trumpet's clamours seem
Like the shrill sea-bird's wailing scream,
Heard o'er the whirlpool's gulfing stream,
The sinking seaman's knell!

XXV

"Seem'd in this dismal hour, that Fate
Would Camlan's ruin antedate,
And spare dark Mordred's crime;
Already gasping on the ground
Lie twenty of the Table Round,
Of chivalry the prime.
Arthur, in anguish, tore away
From head and beard his tresses grey,
And she, proud Gyneth, felt dismay,
And quaked with ruth and fear;
But still she deem'd her mother's shade
Hung o'er the tumult, and forbade

The sign that had the slaughter staid,
And chid the rising tear.
Then Brunor, Taulas, Mador, fell,
Helias the White, and Lionel,
And many a champion more;
Rochemont and Dinadam are down,
And Ferrand of the Forest Brown
Lies gasping in his gore.
Vanoc, by mighty Morolt press'd
Even to the confines of the list,
Young Vanoc of the beardless face
(Fame spoke the youth of Merlin's race),
O'erpower'd, at Gyneth's footstool bled,
His heart's-blood dyed her sandals red.
But then the sky was overcast,
Then howl'd at once a whirlwind's blast,
And, rent by sudden throes,
Yawn'd in mid lists the quaking earth,
And from the gulf,—tremendous birth!—
The form of Merlin rose.

XXVI

"Sternly the Wizard Prophet eyed
The dreary lists with slaughter dyed,
And sternly raised his hand:—
'Madmen,' he said, 'your strife forbear!
And thou, fair cause of mischief, hear
The doom thy fates demand!
Long shall close in stony sleep
Eyes for ruth that would not weep;
Iron lethargy shall seal
Heart that pity scorn'd to feel.
Yet, because thy mother's art
Warp'd thine unsuspicious heart,
And for love of Arthur's race,
Punishment is blent with grace,
Thou shalt bear thy penance lone
In the valley of Saint John,
And this weird shall overtake thee;
Sleep, until a knight shall wake thee,
For feats of arms as far renown'd
As warrior of the Table Round.

Long endurance of thy slumber
Well may teach the world to number
All their woes from Gyneth's pride,
When the Red Cross champions died.'

XXVII

"As Merlin speaks, on Gyneth's eye
Slumber's load begins to lie;
Fear and anger vainly strive
Still to keep its light alive.
Twice, with effort and with pause,
O'er her brow her hand she draws;
Twice her strength in vain she tries,
From the fatal chair to rise;
Merlin's magic doom is spoken,
Vanoc's death must now be wroken.
Slow the dark-fringed eyelids fall,
Curtaining each azure ball,
Slowly as on summer eves
Violets fold their dusky leaves.
The weighty baton of command
Now bears down her sinking hand,
On her shoulder droops her head;
Net of pearl and golden thread,
Bursting, gave her locks to flow
O'er her arm and breast of snow.
And so lovely seem'd she there,
Spell-bound in her ivory chair,
That her angry sire, repenting,
Craved stern Merlin for relenting,
And the champions, for her sake,
Would again the contest wake;
Till, in necromantic night,
Gyneth vanish'd from their sight.

XXVIII

"Still she bears her weird alone,
In the Valley of Saint John;
And her semblance oft will seem,
Mingling in a champion's dream,
Of her weary lot to 'plain,
And crave his aid to burst her chain.

While her wondrous tale was new,
Warriors to her rescue drew,
East and west, and south and north,
From the Liffy, Thames, and Forth.
Most have sought in vain the glen,
Tower nor castle could they ken;
Not at every time or tide,
Nor by every eye, descried.
Fast and vigil must be borne,
Many a night in watching worn,
Ere an eye of mortal powers
Can discern those magic towers.
Of the persevering few,
Some from hopeless task withdrew,
When they read the dismal threat
Graved upon the gloomy gate.
Few have braved the yawning door,
And those few return'd no more.
In the lapse of time forgot,
Wellnigh lost is Gyneth's lot;
Sound her sleep as in the tomb,
Till waken'd by the trump of doom."

END OF LYULPH'S TALE.

---

Here pause, my tale; for all too soon,
My Lucy, comes the hour of noon.
Already from thy lofty dome
Its courtly inmates 'gin to roam,
And each, to kill the goodly day
That God has granted them, his way
Of lazy sauntering has sought;
Lordlings and witlings not a few,
Incapable of doing aught,
Yet ill at ease with nought to do.
Here is no longer place for me;
For, Lucy, thou wouldst blush to see
Some phantom, fashionably thin,
With limb of lath and kerchief'd chin,
And lounging gape, or sneering grin,
Steal sudden on our privacy.

And how should I, so humbly born,
Endure the graceful spectre's scorn?
Faith! ill, I fear, while conjuring wand
Of English oak is hard at hand.

II

Or grant the hour be all too soon
For Hessian boot and pantaloon,
And grant the lounger seldom strays
Beyond the smooth and gravell'd maze,
Laud we the gods, that Fashion's train
Holds hearts of more adventurous strain.
Artists are hers, who scorn to trace
Their rules from Nature's boundless grace,
But their right paramount assert
To limit her by pedant art,
Damning whate'er of vast and fair
Exceeds a canvas three feet square.
This thicket, for their *gumption* fit,
May furnish such a happy *bit*.
Bards, too, are hers, wont to recite
Their own sweet lays by waxen light,
Half in the salver's tingle drown'd,
While the *chasse-café* glides around;
And such may hither secret stray,
To labour an extempore:
Or sportsman, with his boisterous hollo,
May here his wiser spaniel follow,
Or stage-struck Juliet may presume
To choose this bower for tiring-room;
And we alike must shun regard,
From painter, player, sportsman, bard.
Insects that skim in Fashion's sky,
Wasp, blue-bottle, or butterfly,
Lucy, have all alarms for us,
For all can hum and all can buzz.

III

But oh, my Lucy, say how long
We still must dread this trifling throng,
And stoop to hide, with coward art,
The genuine feelings of the heart!

No parents thine, whose just command
Should rule their child's obedient hand;
Thy guardians, with contending voice,
Press each his individual choice.
And which is Lucy's?—Can it be
That puny fop, trimm'd cap-a-pee,
Who loves in the saloon to show
The arms that never knew a foe;
Whose sabre trails along the ground,
Whose legs in shapeless boots are drown'd;
A new Achilles, sure,—the steel
Fled from his breast to fence his heel;
One, for the simple manly grace
That wont to deck our martial race,
Who comes in foreign trashery
Of tinkling chain and spur,
A walking haberdashery,
Of feathers, lace, and fur:
In Rowley's antiquated phrase,
Horse-milliner of modern days?

IV

Or is it he, the wordy youth,
So early train'd for statesman's part,
Who talks of honour, faith, and truth,
As themes that he has got by heart;
Whose ethics Chesterfield can teach,
Whose logic is from Single-speech;
Who scorns the meanest thought to vent,
Save in the phrase of Parliament;
Who, in a tale of cat and mouse,
Calls "order," and "divides the house,"
Who craves "permission to reply,"
Whose "noble friend is in his eye";
Whose loving tender some have reckon'd
A *motion*, you should gladly *second*?

V

What, neither? Can there be a third,
To such resistless swains preferr'd?—
O why, my Lucy, turn aside,
With that quick glance of injured pride?

Forgive me, love, I cannot bear
That alter'd and resentful air.
Were all the wealth of Russel mine,
And all the rank of Howard's line,
All would I give for leave to dry
That dewdrop trembling in thine eye.
Think not I fear such fops can wile
From Lucy more than careless smile;
But yet if wealth and high degree
Give gilded counters currency,
Must I not fear, when rank and birth
Stamp the pure ore of genuine worth?
Nobles there are, whose martial fires
Rival the fame that raised their sires,
And patriots, skill'd through storms of fate
To guide and guard the reeling state.
Such, such there are—If such should come,
Arthur must tremble and be dumb,
Self-exiled seek some distant shore,
And mourn till life and grief are o'er.

VI

What sight, what signal of alarm,
That Lucy clings to Arthur's arm?
Or is it, that the rugged way
Makes Beauty lean on lover's stay?
Oh, no! for on the vale and brake
Nor sight nor sounds of danger wake,
And this trim sward of velvet green
Were carpet for the Fairy Queen.
That pressure slight was but to tell,
That Lucy loves her Arthur well,
And fain would banish from his mind
Suspicious fear and doubt unkind.

VII

But wouldst thou bid the demons fly
Like mist before the dawning sky,
There is but one resistless spell—
Say, wilt thou guess, or must I tell?
'Twere hard to name, in minstrel phrase,
A landaulet and four blood-bays,

But bards agree this wizard band
Can but be bound in Northern land.
'Tis there—nay, draw not back thy hand!—
'Tis there this slender finger round
Must golden amulet be bound,
Which, bless'd with many a holy prayer,
Can change to rapture lovers' care,
And doubt and jealousy shall die,
And fears give place to ecstasy.

VIII

Now, trust me, Lucy, all too long
Has been thy lover's tale and song.
O, why so silent, love, I pray?
Have I not spoke the livelong day?
And will not Lucy deign to say
One word her friend to bless?
I ask but one—a simple sound,
Within three little letters bound,
O, let the word be YES!

## CANTO THIRD

### INTRODUCTION

I

Long loved, long woo'd, and lately won,
My life's best hope, and now mine own!
Doth not this rude and Alpine glen
Recall our favourite haunts agen?
A wild resemblance we can trace,
Though reft of every softer grace,
As the rough warrior's brow may bear
A likeness to a sister fair.
Full well advised our Highland host,
That this wild pass on foot be cross'd,
While round Ben-Cruach's mighty base
Wheel the slow steeds and lingering chaise.
The keen old carle, with Scottish pride,

He praised his glen and mountains wide;
An eye he bears for nature's face,
Ay, and for woman's lovely grace.
Even in such mean degree we find
The subtle Scot's observing mind;
For, nor the chariot nor the train
Could gape of vulgar wonder gain,
But when old Allan would expound
Of Beal-na-paish the Celtic sound,
His bonnet doff'd, and bow, applied
His legend to my bonny bride;
While Lucy blush'd beneath his eye,
Courteous and cautious, shrewd and sly.

II

Enough of him.—Now, ere we lose,
Plunged in the vale, the distant views,
Turn thee, my love! look back once more
To the blue lake's retiring shore.
On its smooth breast the shadows seem
Like objects in a morning dream,
What time the slumberer is aware
He sleeps, and all the vision's air:
Even so, on yonder liquid lawn,
In hues of bright reflection drawn,
Distinct the shaggy mountains lie,
Distinct the rocks, distinct the sky;
The summer-clouds so plain we note,
That we might count each dappled spot:
We gaze and we admire, yet know
The scene is all delusive show.
Such dreams of bliss would Arthur draw,
When first his Lucy's form he saw;
Yet sigh'd and sicken'd as he drew,
Despairing they could e'er prove true!

III

But, Lucy, turn thee now, to view
Up the fair glen, our destined way:
The fairy path that we pursue,
Distinguish'd but by greener hue,

Winds round the purple brae,
While Alpine flowers of varied dye
For carpet serve, or tapestry.
See how the little runnels leap,
In threads of silver, down the steep,
To swell the brooklet's moan!
Seems that the Highland Naiad grieves,
Fantastic while her crown she weaves,
Of rowan, birch, and alder leaves,
So lovely, and so lone.
There's no illusion there; these flowers,
That wailing brook, these lovely bowers,
Are, Lucy, all our own;
And, since thine Arthur call'd thee wife,
Such seems the prospect of his life,
A lovely path, on-winding still,
By gurgling brook and sloping hill.
'Tis true, that mortals cannot tell
What waits them in the distant dell;
But be it hap, or be it harm,
We tread the pathway arm in arm.

IV

And now, my Lucy, wot'st thou why
I could thy bidding twice deny,
When twice you pray'd I would again
Resume the legendary strain
Of the bold knight of Triermain?
At length yon peevish vow you swore,
That you would sue to me no more,
Until the minstrel fit drew near,
And made me prize a listening ear.
But, loveliest, when thou first didst pray
Continuance of the knightly lay,
Was it not on the happy day
That made thy hand mine own?
When, dizzied with mine ecstasy,
Nought past, or present, or to be,
Could I or think on, hear, or see,
Save, Lucy, thee alone!
A giddy draught my rapture was,
As ever chemist's magic gas.

V

Again the summons I denied
In you fair capital of Clyde:
My Harp—or let me rather choose
The good old classic form—my Muse
(For Harp's an over-scutched phrase,
Worn out by bards of modern days),
My Muse, then—seldom will she wake,
Save by dim wood and silent lake;
She is the wild and rustic Maid,
Whose foot unsandall'd loves to tread
Where the soft greensward is inlaid
With varied moss and thyme;
And, lest the simple lily-braid,
That coronets her temples, fade,
She hides her still in greenwood shade,
To meditate her rhyme.

VI

And now she comes! The murmur dear
Of the wild brook hath caught her ear,
The glade hath won her eye;
She longs to join with each blithe rill
That dances down the Highland hill,
Her blither melody.
And now, my Lucy's way to cheer,
She bids Ben-Cruach's echoes hear
How closed the tale, my love whilere
Loved for its chivalry.
List how she tells, in notes of flame,
"Child Roland to the dark tower came!"

## CANTO THIRD

I

Bewcastle now must keep the Hold,
Speir-Adam's steeds must bide in stall,
Of Hartley-burn the bowmen bold
Must only shoot from battled wall;

And Liddesdale may buckle spur,
And Teviot now may belt the brand,
Taras and Ewes keep nightly stir,
And Eskdale foray Cumberland.
Of wasted fields and plunder'd flocks
The Borderers bootless may complain ;
They lack the sword of brave De Vaux,
There comes no aid from Triermain.
That lord, on high adventure bound,
Hath wander'd forth alone,
And day and night keeps watchful round
In the valley of Saint John.

II

When first began his vigil bold,
The moon twelve summer nights was old,
And shone both fair and full ;
High in the vault of cloudless blue,
O'er streamlet, dale, and rock, she threw
Her light composed and cool.
Stretch'd on the brown hill's heathy breast,
Sir Roland eyed the vale ;
Chief where, distinguish'd from the rest,
Those clustering rocks uprear'd their crest,
The dwelling of the fair distress'd,
As told grey Lyulph's tale.
Thus as he lay, the lamp of night
Was quivering on his armour bright,
In beams that rose and fell,
And danced upon his buckler's boss,
That lay beside him on the moss,
As on a crystal well.

III

Ever he watch'd, and oft he deem'd,
While on the mound the moonlight stream'd,
It alter'd to his eyes ;
Fain would he hope the rocks 'gan change
To buttress'd walls their shapeless range,
Fain think, by transmutation strange,
He saw grey turrets rise.
But scarce his heart with hope throbb'd high,

Before the wild illusions fly,
Which fancy had conceived,
Abetted by an anxious eye
That long'd to be deceived.
It was a fond deception all,
Such as, in solitary hall,
Beguiles the musing eye,
When, gazing on the sinking fire,
Bulwark, and battlement, and spire,
In the red gulf we spy.
For, seen by moon of middle night,
Or by the blaze of noontide bright,
Or by the dawn of morning light,
Or evening's western flame,
In every tide, at every hour,
In mist, in sunshine, and in shower,
The rocks remain'd the same.

IV

Oft has he traced the charmed mound,
Oft climb'd its crest, or paced it round,
Yet nothing might explore,
Save that the crags so rudely piled,
At distance seen, resemblance wild
To a rough fortress bore.
Yet still his watch the Warrior keeps,
Feeds hard and spare, and seldom sleeps,
And drinks but of the well;
Ever by day he walks the hill,
And when the evening gale is chill,
He seeks a rocky cell,
Like hermit poor to bid his bead,
And tell his Ave and his Creed,
Invoking every saint at need,
For aid to burst his spell.

V

And now the moon her orb has hid,
And dwindled to a silver thread,
Dim seen in middle heaven,
While o'er its curve careering fast
Before the fury of the blast

The midnight clouds are driven.
The brooklet raved, for on the hills
The upland showers had swoln the rills,
And down the torrents came;
Mutter'd the distant thunder dread,
And frequent o'er the vale was spread
A sheet of lightning flame.
De Vaux, within his mountain cave
(No human step the storm durst brave),
To moody meditation gave
Each faculty of soul,
Till, lull'd by distant torrent sound,
And the sad winds that whistled round,
Upon his thoughts, in musing drown'd,
A broken slumber stole.

VI

'Twas then was heard a heavy sound
(Sound, strange and fearful there to hear,
'Mongst desert hills, where, leagues around,
Dwelt but the gorcock and the deer),
As, starting from his couch of fern,
Again he heard, in clangour stern,
That deep and solemn swell,—
Twelve times, in measured tone, it spoke,
Like some proud minster's pealing clock,
Or city's 'larum-bell.
What thought was Roland's first when fell,
In that deep wilderness, the knell
Upon his startled ear?
To slander warrior were I loth,
Yet must I hold my minstrel troth,—
It was a thought of fear.

VII

But lively was the mingled thrill
That chased that momentary chill,
For Love's keen wish was there,
And eager Hope, and Valour high,
And the proud glow of Chivalry,
That burn'd to do and dare.
Forth from the cave the Warrior rush'd,

Long ere the mountain-voice was hush'd,
That answer'd to the knell;
For long and far the unwonted sound,
Eddying in echoes round and round,
Was toss'd from fell to fell;
And Glaramara answer flung,
And Grisdale-pike responsive rung,
And Legbert heights their echoes swung,
As far as Derwent's dell.

VIII

Forth upon trackless darkness gazed
The Knight, bedeafen'd and amazed,
Till all was hush'd and still,
Save the swoln torrent's sullen roar,
And the night-blast that wildly bore
Its course along the hill.
Then on the northern sky there came
A light, as of reflected flame,
And over Legbert-head,
As if by magic art controll'd,
A mighty meteor slowly roll'd
Its orb of fiery red;
Thou wouldst have thought some demon dire
Came mounted on that car of fire,
To do his errand dread.
Far on the sloping valley's course,
On thicket, rock, and torrent hoarse,
Shingle and Scrae, and Fell and Force,
A dusky light arose:
Display'd, yet alter'd was the scene;
Dark rock, and brook of silver sheen,
Even the gay thicket's summer green,
In bloody tincture glows.

IX

De Vaux had mark'd the sunbeams set,
At eve, upon the coronet
Of that enchanted mound,
And seen but crags at random flung,
That, o'er the brawling torrent hung,
In desolation frown'd.

What sees he by that meteor's lour?—
A banner'd Castle, keep, and tower,
Return the lurid gleam,
With battled walls and buttress fast,
And barbican and ballium vast,
And airy flanking towers, that cast
Their shadows on the stream.
'Tis no deceit!—distinctly clear
Crenell and parapet appear,
While o'er the pile that meteor drear
Makes momentary pause;
Then forth its solemn path it drew,
And fainter yet, and fainter grew
Those gloomy towers upon the view,
As its wild light withdraws.

X

Forth from the cave did Roland rush,
O'er crag and stream, through brier and bush;
Yet far he had not sped,
Ere sunk was that portentous light
Behind the hills, and utter night
Was on the valley spread.
He paused perforce, and blew his horn,
And, on the mountain-echoes borne,
Was heard an answering sound,
A wild and lonely trumpet-note,—
In middle air it seem'd to float
High o'er the battled mound;
And sounds were heard, as when a guard
Of some proud castle, holding ward,
Pace forth their knightly round.
The valiant Knight of Triermain
Rung forth his challenge-blast again,
But answer came there none;
And 'mid the mingled wind and rain,
Darkling he sought the vale in vain,
Until the dawning shone;
And when it dawn'd, that wondrous sight,
Distinctly seen by meteor-light,
It all had pass'd away!

And that enchanted mount once more
A pile of granite fragments bore,
As at the close of day.

XI

Steel'd for the deed, De Vaux's heart
Scorn'd from his venturous quest to part,
He walks the vale once more;
But only sees, by night or day,
That shatter'd pile of rocks so grey,
Hears but the torrent's roar.
Till when, through hills of azure borne,
The moon renew'd her silver horn,
Just at the time her waning ray
Had faded in the dawning day,
A summer mist arose;
Adown the vale the vapours float,
And cloudy undulations moat
That tufted mound of mystic note,
As round its base they close.
And higher now the fleecy tide
Ascends its stern and shaggy side,
Until the airy billows hide
The rock's majestic isle;
It seem'd a veil of filmy lawn,
By some fantastic fairy drawn
Around enchanted pile.

XII

The breeze came softly down the brook,
And, sighing as it blew,
The veil of silver mist it shook,
And to De Vaux's eager look
Renew'd that wondrous view.
For, though the loitering vapour braved
The gentle breeze, yet oft it waved
Its mantle's dewy fold;
And still, when shook that filmy screen,
Were towers and bastions dimly seen,
And Gothic battlements between
Their gloomy length unroll'd.
Speed, speed, De Vaux, ere on thine eye

Once more the fleeting vision die!
—The gallant knight 'gan speed
As prompt and light as, when the hound
Is opening, and the horn is wound,
Careers the hunter's steed.
Down the steep dell his course amain
Hath rivall'd archer's shaft;
But ere the mound he could attain,
The rocks their shapeless form regain,
And, mocking loud his labour vain,
The mountain spirits laugh'd.
Far up the echoing dell was borne
Their wild unearthly shout of scorn.

XIII

Wroth wax'd the Warrior.—"Am I then
Fool'd by the enemies of men,
Like a poor hind, whose homeward way
Is haunted by malicious fay?
Is Triermain become your taunt,
De Vaux your scorn? False fiends, avaunt!"
A weighty curtal-axe he bare;
The baleful blade so bright and square,
And the tough shaft of heben wood,
Were oft in Scottish gore imbrued.
Backward his stately form he drew,
And at the rocks the weapon threw,
Just where one crag's projected crest
Hung proudly balanced o'er the rest.
Hurl'd with main force, the weapon's shock
Rent a huge fragment of the rock.
If by mere strength, 'twere hard to tell,
Or if the blow dissolved some spell,
But down the headlong ruin came,
With cloud of dust and flash of flame.
Down bank, o'er bush, its course was borne,
Crush'd lay the copse, the earth was torn,
Till staid at length, the ruin dread
Cumber'd the torrent's rocky bed,
And bade the waters' high-swoln tide
Seek other passage for its pride.

XIV

When ceased that thunder, Triermain
Survey'd the mound's rude front again ;
And, lo ! the ruin had laid bare,
Hewn in the stone, a winding stair,
Whose moss'd and fractured steps might lend
The means the summit to ascend ;
And by whose aid the brave De Vaux
Began to scale these magic rocks,
And soon a platform won,
Where, the wild witchery to close,
Within three lances' length arose
The Castle of Saint John !
No misty phantom of the air,
No meteor-blazon'd show was there ;
In morning splendour, full and fair,
The massive fortress shone.

XV

Embattled high and proudly tower'd,
Shaded by ponderous flankers, lower'd
The portal's gloomy way.
Though for six hundred years and more,
Its strength had brook'd the tempest's roar,
The scutcheon'd emblems which it bore
Had suffer'd no decay :
But from the eastern battlement
A turret had made sheer descent,
And, down in recent ruin rent,
In the mid torrent lay.
Else, o'er the Castle's brow sublime,
Insults of violence or of time
Unfelt had pass'd away.
In shapeless characters of yore,
The gate this stern inscription bore :—

XVI

Inscription

" Patience waits the destined day,
Strength can clear the cumber'd way.
Warrior, who hast waited long,

Firm of soul, of sinew strong,
It is given to thee to gaze
On the pile of ancient days.
Never mortal builder's hand
This enduring fabric plann'd;
Sign and sigil, word of power,
From the earth raised keep and tower.
View it o'er, and pace it round,
Rampart, turret, battled mound.
Dare no more! To cross the gate
Were to tamper with thy fate;
Strength and fortitude were vain,
View it o'er—and turn again."—

XVII

"That would I," said the Warrior bold,
"If that my frame were bent and old,
And my thin blood dropp'd slow and cold
As icicle in thaw;
But while my heart can feel it dance,
Blithe as the sparkling wine of France,
And this good arm wields sword or lance,
I mock these words of awe!"
He said; the wicket felt the sway
Of his strong hand, and straight gave way,
And, with rude crash and jarring bray,
The rusty bolts withdraw;
But o'er the threshold as he strode,
And forward took the vaulted road,
An unseen arm, with force amain,
The ponderous gate flung close again,
And rusted bolt and bar
Spontaneous took their place once more,
While the deep arch with sullen roar
Return'd their surly jar.
"Now closed is the gin and the prey within
By the Rood of Lanercost!
But he that would win the war-wolf's skin,
May rue him of his boast."
Thus muttering, on the Warrior went,
By dubious light down steep descent.

XVIII

Unbarr'd, unlock'd, unwatch'd, a port
Led to the Castle's outer court:
There the main fortress, broad and tall,
Spread its long range of bower and hall,
And towers of varied size,
Wrought with each ornament extreme,
That Gothic art, in wildest dream
Of fancy, could devise;
But full between the Warrior's way
And the main portal arch, there lay
An inner moat;
Nor bridge nor boat
Affords De Vaux the means to cross
The clear, profound, and silent fosse.
His arms aside in haste he flings,
Cuirass of steel and hauberk rings,
And down falls helm, and down the shield,
Rough with the dints of many a field.
Fair was his manly form, and fair
His keen dark eye, and close curl'd hair,
When, all unarm'd, save that the brand
Of well-proved metal graced his hand,
With naught to fence his dauntless breast
But the close gipon's under-vest,
Whose sullied buff the sable stains
Of hauberk and of mail retains,—
Roland De Vaux upon the brim
Of the broad moat stood prompt to swim.

XIX

Accoutred thus he dared the tide,
And soon he reach'd the farther side,
And enter'd soon the Hold,
And paced a hall, whose walls so wide
Were blazon'd all with feats of pride,
By warriors done of old.
In middle lists they counter'd here,
While trumpets seem'd to blow;
And there, in den or desert drear,
They quell'd gigantic foe,
Braved the fierce griffon in his ire,

Or faced the dragon's breath of fire.
Strange in their arms, and strange in face,
Heroes they seem'd of ancient race,
Whose deeds of arms, and race, and name,
Forgotten long by later fame,
Were here depicted, to appal
Those of an age degenerate,
Whose bold intrusion braved their fate
In this enchanted hall.
For some short space the venturous Knight
With these high marvels fed his sight,
Then sought the chamber's upper end,
Where three broad easy steps ascend
To an arch'd portal door,
In whose broad folding leaves of state
Was framed a wicket window-grate,
And, ere he ventured more,
The gallant Knight took earnest view
The grated wicket-window through.

XX

O, for his arms! Of martial weed
Had never mortal Knight such need!—
He spied a stately gallery; all
Of snow-white marble was the wall,
The vaulting, and the floor;
And, contrast strange! on either hand
There stood array'd in sable band
Four Maids whom Afric bore;
And each a Lybian tiger led,
Held by as bright and frail a thread
As Lucy's golden hair,—
For the leash that bound these monsters dread
Was but of gossamer.
Each Maiden's short barbaric vest
Left all unclosed the knee and breast,
And limbs of shapely jet;
White was their vest and turban's fold,
On arms and ankles rings of gold
In savage pomp were set;
A quiver on their shoulders lay,
And in their hand an assagay.

Such and so silent stood they there,
That Roland wellnigh hoped
He saw a band of statues rare,
Station'd the gazer's soul to scare;
But, when the wicket oped,
Each grisly beast 'gan upward draw,
Roll'd his grim eye, and spread his claw,
Scented the air, and lick'd his jaw;
While these weird Maids, in Moorish tongue,
A wild and dismal warning sung.

XXI

"Rash Adventurer, bear thee back!
Dread the spell of Dahomay!
Fear the race of Zaharak,
Daughters of the burning day!

"When the whirlwind's gusts are wheeling,
Ours it is the dance to braid;
Zarah's sands in pillars reeling,
Join the measure that we tread,
When the Moon has donn'd her cloak,
And the stars are red to see,
Shrill when pipes the sad Siroc,
Music meet for such as we.

"Where the shatter'd columns lie,
Showing Carthage once had been,
If the wandering Santon's eye
Our mysterious rites hath seen,—
Oft he cons the prayer of death,
To the nations preaches doom,
'Azrael's brand hath left the sheath!
Moslems, think upon the tomb!'

"Ours the scorpion, ours the snake,
Ours the hydra of the fen,
Ours the tiger of the brake,
All that plagues the sons of men.
Ours the tempest's midnight wrack,
Pestilence that wastes by day—
Dread the race of Zaharak!
Fear the spell of Dahomay!"

XXII

Uncouth and strange the accents shrill
Rung those vaulted roofs among,
Long it was ere, faint and still,
Died the far-resounding song.
While yet the distant echoes roll,
The Warrior communed with his soul.
"When first I took this venturous quest,
I swore upon the rood,
Neither to stop, nor turn, nor rest,
For evil or for good.
My forward path too well I ween,
Lies yonder fearful ranks between;
For man unarm'd, 'tis bootless hope
With tigers and with fiends to cope—
Yet, if I turn, what waits me there,
Save famine dire and fell despair?—
Other conclusion let me try,
Since, choose howe'er I list, I die.
Forward, lies faith and knightly fame;
Behind, are perjury and shame.
In life or death I hold my word!"
With that he drew his trusty sword,
Caught down a banner from the wall,
And enter'd thus the fearful hall.

XXIII

On high each wayward Maiden threw
Her swarthy arm, with wild halloo!
On either side a tiger sprung—
Against the leftward foe he flung
The ready banner, to engage
With tangling folds the brutal rage;
The right-hand monster in mid air
He struck so fiercely and so fair,
Through gullet and through spinal bone
The trenchant blade hath sheerly gone.
His grisly brethren ramp'd and yell'd,
But the slight leash their rage withheld,
Whilst, 'twixt their ranks, the dangerous road
Firmly, though swift, the champion strode.
Safe to the gallery's bound he drew,

Safe pass'd an open portal through;
And when against pursuit he flung
The gate, judge if the echoes rung!
Onward his daring course he bore,
While, mix'd with dying growl and roar,
Wild jubilee and loud hurra
Pursued him on his venturous way.

XXIV

"Hurra, hurra! Our watch is done!
We hail once more the tropic sun.
Pallid beams of northern day,
Farewell, farewell! Hurra, hurra!

"Five hundred years o'er this cold glen
Hath the pale sun come round agen;
Foot of man, till now, hath ne'er
Dared to cross the Hall of Fear.

"Warrior! thou, whose dauntless heart
Gives us from our ward to part,
Be as strong in future trial,
Where resistance is denial.

"Now for Afric's glowing sky,
Zwenga wide and Atlas high,
Zaharak and Dahomay!——
Mount the winds! Hurra, hurra!"

XXV

The wizard song at distance died,
As if in ether borne astray,
While through waste halls and chambers wide
The Knight pursued his steady way,
Till to a lofty dome he came,
That flash'd with such a brilliant flame,
As if the wealth of all the world
Were there in rich confusion hurl'd.
For here the gold, in sandy heaps,
With duller earth incorporate, sleeps;
Was there in ingots piled, and there

Coin'd badge of empery it bare;
Yonder, huge bars of silver lay,
Dimm'd by the diamond's neighbouring ray,
Like the pale moon in morning day;
And in the midst four Maidens stand,
The daughters of some distant land.
Their hue was of the dark-red dye,
That fringes oft a thunder sky;
Their hands palmetto baskets bare,
And cotton fillets bound their hair;
Slim was their form, their mien was shy,
To earth they bent the humbled eye,
Folded their arms, and suppliant kneel'd,
And thus their proffer'd gifts reveal'd.

XXVI

CHORUS

"See the treasures Merlin piled,
Portion meet for Arthur's child.
Bathe in Wealth's unbounded stream,
Wealth that Avarice ne'er could dream!"

FIRST MAIDEN

"See these clots of virgin gold!
Sever'd from the sparry mould,
Nature's mystic alchemy
In the mine thus bade them lie;
And their orient smile can win
Kings to stoop and saints to sin."—

SECOND MAIDEN

"See these pearls, that long have slept;
These were tears by Naiads wept
For the loss of Marinel.
Tritons in the silver shell
Treasured them, till hard and white
As the teeth of Amphitrite."—

THIRD MAIDEN

"Does a livelier hue delight?
Here are rubies blazing bright,

Here the emerald's fairy green,
And the topaz glows between;
Here their varied hues unite,
In the changeful chrysolite."—

FOURTH MAIDEN

"Leave these gems of poorer shine,
Leave them all, and look on mine!
While their glories I expand,
Shade thine eyebrows with thy hand.
Mid-day sun and diamond's blaze
Blind the rash beholder's gaze."—

CHORUS

"Warrior, seize the splendid store;
Would 'twere all our mountains bore!
We should ne'er in future story,
Read, Peru, thy perish'd glory!"

XXVII

Calmly and unconcern'd, the Knight
Waved aside the treasures bright:—
"Gentle Maidens, rise, I pray!
Bar not thus my destined way.
Let these boasted brilliant toys
Braid the hair of girls and boys!
Bid your streams of gold expand
O'er proud London's thirsty land.
De Vaux of wealth saw never need,
Save to purvey him arms and steed,
And all the ore he deign'd to hoard
Inlays his helm, and hilts his sword."
Thus gently parting from their hold,
He left, unmoved, the dome of gold.

XXVIII

And now the morning sun was high,
De Vaux was weary, faint, and dry;
When, lo! a plashing sound he hears,
A gladsome signal that he nears
Some frolic water-run;

And soon he reach'd a court-yard square,
Where, dancing in the sultry air,
Toss'd high aloft, a fountain fair
Was sparkling in the sun.
On right and left, a fair arcade,
In long perspective view display'd
Alleys and bowers, for sun or shade:
But, full in front, a door,
Low-brow'd and dark, seem'd as it led
To the lone dwelling of the dead,
Whose memory was no more.

XXIX

Here stopp'd De Vaux an instant's space,
To bathe his parched lips and face,
And mark'd with well-pleased eye,
Refracted on the fountain stream,
In rainbow hues the dazzling beam
Of that gay summer sky.
His senses felt a mild control,
Like that which lulls the weary soul,
From contemplation high
Relaxing, when the ear receives
The music that the greenwood leaves
Make to the breezes' sigh.

XXX

And oft in such a dreamy mood,
The half-shut eye can frame
Fair apparitions in the wood,
As if the Nymphs of field and flood
In gay procession came.
Are these of such fantastic mould,
Seen distant down the fair arcade,
These Maids enlink'd in sister-fold,
Who, late at bashful distance staid,
Now tripping from the greenwood shade,
Nearer the musing champion draw,
And, in a pause of seeming awe,
Again stand doubtful now?—
Ah, that sly pause of witching powers!

That seems to say, "To please be ours,
Be yours to tell us how."
Their hue was of the golden glow
That suns of Candahar bestow,
O'er which in slight suffusion flows
A frequent tinge of paly rose;
Their limbs were fashion'd fair and free,
In nature's justest symmetry;
And, wreathed with flowers, with odours graced,
Their raven ringlets reach'd the waist:
In eastern pomp, its gilding pale
The hennah lent each shapely nail,
And the dark sumah gave the eye
More liquid and more lustrous dye.
The spotless veil of misty lawn,
In studied disarrangement, drawn
The form and bosom o'er,
To win the eye, or tempt the touch,
For modesty show'd all too much—
Too much—yet promised more.

XXXI

"Gentle Knight, a while delay,"
Thus they sung, "thy toilsome way,
While we pay the duty due
To our Master and to you.
Over Avarice, over Fear,
Love triumphant led thee here;
Warrior, list to us, for we
Are slaves to Love, are friends to thee.
Though no treasured gems have we,
To proffer on the bended knee,
Though we boast nor arm nor heart,
For the assagay or dart,
Swains allow each simple girl
Ruby lip and teeth of pearl;
Or, if dangers more you prize,
Flatterers find them in our eyes.

"Stay, then, gentle Warrior, stay,
Rest till evening steal on day;

Stay, O, stay!—in yonder bowers
We will braid thy locks with flowers,
Spread the feast and fill the wine,
Charm thy ear with sounds divine,
Weave our dances till delight
Yield to languor, day to night.

"Then shall she you most approve
Sing the lays that best you love,
Soft thy mossy couch shall spread,
Watch thy pillow, prop thy head,
Till the weary night be o'er—
Gentle Warrior, wouldst thou more?
Wouldst thou more, fair Warrior,—she
Is slave to Love and slave to thee."

XXXII

O, do not hold it for a crime
In the bold hero of my rhyme,
For Stoic look,
And meet rebuke,
He lack'd the heart or time;
As round the band of sirens trip,
He kiss'd one damsel's laughing lip,
And press'd another's proffer'd hand,
Spoke to them all in accents bland,
But broke their magic circle through;
"Kind Maids," he said, "adieu, adieu!
My fate, my fortune, forward lies."
He said, and vanish'd from their eyes;
But, as he dared that darksome way,
Still heard behind their lovely lay:—
"Fair Flower of Courtesy, depart!
Go, where the feelings of the heart
With the warm pulse in concord move;
Go, where Virtue sanctions Love!"

XXXIII

Downward De Vaux through darksome ways
And ruin'd vaults has gone,
Till issue from their wilder'd maze,
Or safe retreat, seem'd none,—

And e'en the dismal path he strays
Grew worse as he went on.
For cheerful sun, for living air,
Foul vapours rise and mine-fires glare,
Whose fearful light the dangers show'd
That dogg'd him on that dreadful road.
Deep pits, and lakes of waters dun,
They show'd, but show'd not how to shun.
These scenes of desolate despair,
These smothering clouds of poison'd air,
How gladly had De Vaux exchanged,
Though 'twere to face yon tigers ranged!
Nay, soothful bards have said,
So perilous his state seem'd now,
He wish'd him under arbour bough
With Asia's willing maid.
When, joyful sound! at distance near
A trumpet flourish'd loud and clear,
And as it ceased, a lofty lay
Seem'd thus to chide his lagging way.

XXXIV

"Son of Honour, theme of story,
Think on the reward before ye!
Danger, darkness, toil despise;
'Tis Ambition bids thee rise.

"He that would her heights ascend,
Many a weary step must wend;
Hand and foot and knee he tries;
Thus Ambition's minions rise.

"Lag not now, though rough the way,
Fortune's mood brooks no delay;
Grasp the boon that's spread before ye,
Monarch's power, and Conqueror's glory!"

It ceased. Advancing on the sound,
A steep ascent the Wanderer found,
And then a turret stair:
Nor climb'd he far its steepy round
Till fresher blew the air,

And next a welcome glimpse was given,
That cheer'd him with the light of heaven.
At length his toil had won
A lofty hall with trophies dress'd,
Where, as to greet imperial guest,
Four Maidens stood, whose crimson vest
Was bound with golden zone.

XXXV

Of Europe seem'd the damsels all;
The first a nymph of lively Gaul,
Whose easy step and laughing eye
Her borrow'd air of awe belie;
The next a maid of Spain,
Dark-eyed, dark-hair'd, sedate, yet bold;
White ivory skin and tress of gold,
Her shy and bashful comrade told
For daughter of Almaine.
These maidens bore a royal robe,
With crown, with sceptre, and with globe,
Emblems of empery;
The fourth a space behind them stood,
And leant upon a harp, in mood
Of minstrel ecstasy.
Of merry England she, in dress
Like ancient British Druidess.
Her hair an azure fillet bound,
Her graceful vesture swept the ground,
And, in her hand display'd,
A crown did that fourth Maiden hold,
But unadorn'd with gems and gold,
Of glossy laurel made.

XXXVI

At once to brave De Vaux knelt down
These foremost Maidens three,
And proffer'd sceptre, robe, and crown,
Liegedom and seignorie,
O'er many a region wide and fair,
Destined, they said, for Arthur's heir;
But homage would he none:—

"Rather," he said, "De Vaux would ride,
A Warden of the Border-side,
In plate and mail, than, robed in pride,
A monarch's empire own;
Rather, far rather, would he be
A free-born knight of England free,
Than sit on Despot's throne."
So pass'd he on, when that fourth Maid,
As starting from a trance,
Upon the harp her finger laid;
Her magic touch the chords obey'd,
Their soul awaked at once!

SONG OF THE FOURTH MAIDEN

"Quake to your foundations deep,
Stately Towers, and Banner'd Keep,
Bid your vaulted echoes moan,
As the dreaded step they own.

"Fiends, that wait on Merlin's spell,
Hear the foot-fall! mark it well!
Spread your dusky wings abroad,
Boune ye for your homeward road!

"It is His, the first who e'er
Dared the dismal Hall of Fear;
His, who hath the snares defied
Spread by Pleasure, Wealth, and Pride.

"Quake to your foundations deep,
Bastion huge, and Turret steep!
Tremble, Keep! and totter, Tower!
This is Gyneth's waking hour."

XXXVII

Thus while she sung, the venturous Knight
Has reach'd a bower, where milder light
Through crimson curtains fell;
Such soften'd shade the hill receives,
Her purple veil when twilight leaves
Upon its western swell.

That bower, the gazer to bewitch,
Had wondrous store of rare and rich
As e'er was seen with eye;
For there by magic skill, I wis,
Form of each thing that living is
Was limn'd in proper dye.
All seem'd to sleep—the timid hare
On form, the stag upon his lair,
The eagle in her eyrie fair
Between the earth and sky.
But what of pictured rich and rare
Could win De Vaux's eye-glance, where,
Deep slumbering in the fatal chair,
He saw King Arthur's child!
Doubt, and anger, and dismay,
From her brow had pass'd away,
Forgot was that fell tourney-day,
For, as she slept, she smiled:
It seem'd, that the repentant Seer
Her sleep of many a hundred year
With gentle dreams beguiled.

XXXVIII

That form of maiden loveliness,
'Twixt childhood and 'twixt youth,
That ivory chair, that silvan dress,
The arms and ankles bare, express
Of Lyulph's tale the truth.
Still upon her garment's hem
Vanoc's blood made purple gem,
And the warder of command
Cumber'd still her sleeping hand;
Still her dark locks dishevell'd flow
From net of pearl o'er breast of snow;
And so fair the slumberer seems,
That De Vaux impeach'd his dreams,
Vapid all and void of might,
Hiding half her charms from sight.
Motionless a while he stands,
Folds his arms and clasps his hands,
Trembling in his fitful joy,

Doubtful how he should destroy
Long-enduring spell;
Doubtful, too, when slowly rise
Dark-fringed lids of Gyneth's eyes,
What these eyes shall tell.—
"St. George! St. Mary! can it be,
That they will kindly look on me!"

XXXIX

Gently, lo! the Warrior kneels,
Soft that lovely hand he steals,
Soft to kiss, and soft to clasp—
But the warder leaves her grasp;
Lightning flashes, rolls the thunder!
Gyneth startles from her sleep,
Totters Tower, and trembles Keep,
Burst the Castle-walls asunder!
Fierce and frequent were the shocks,—
Melt the magic halls away;
——But beneath their mystic rocks,
In the arms of bold De Vaux,
Safe the princess lay;
Safe and free from magic power,
Blushing like the rose's flower
Opening to the day;
And round the Champion's brows were bound
The crown that Druidess had wound,
Of the green laurel-bay.
And this was what remain'd of all
The wealth of each enchanted hall,
The Garland and the Dame:
But where should Warrior seek the meed,
Due to high worth for daring deed,
Except from Love and Fame!

## CONCLUSION

I

My Lucy, when the Maid is won,
The Minstrel's task, thou know'st, is done;
And to require of bard
That to his dregs the tale should run,
Were ordinance too hard.
Our lovers, briefly be it said,
Wedded as lovers wont to wed,
When tale or play is o'er;
Lived long and blest, loved fond and true,
And saw a numerous race renew
The honours that they bore.
Know, too, that when a pilgrim strays,
In morning mist or evening maze,
Along the mountain lone,
That fairy fortress often mocks
His gaze upon the castled rocks
Of the Valley of Saint John;
But never man since brave De Vaux
The charmed portal won.
'Tis now a vain illusive show,
That melts whene'er the sunbeams glow
Or the fresh breeze hath blown.

II

But see, my love, where far below
Our lingering wheels are moving slow,
The whiles, up-gazing still,
Our menials eye our steepy way,
Marvelling, perchance, what whim can stay
Our steps, when eve is sinking grey
On this gigantic hill.
So think the vulgar—Life and time
Ring all their joys in one dull chime
Of luxury and ease;

And, O! beside these simple knaves,
How many better born are slaves
To such coarse joys as these,—
Dead to the nobler sense that glows
When nature's grander scenes unclose!
But, Lucy, we will love them yet,
The mountain's misty coronet,
The greenwood, and the wold;
And love the more, that of their maze
Adventure high of other days
By ancient bards is told,
Bringing, perchance, like my poor tale,
Some moral truth in fiction's veil:
Nor love them less, that o'er the hill
The evening breeze, as now, comes chill;—
My love shall wrap her warm,
And, fearless of the slippery way,
While safe she trips the heathy brae,
Shall hang on Arthur's arm.